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Bazaar Paintings of Calcutta

By W. G. Archer

PUBLISHED FOR THE VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM
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VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

BAZAAR PAINTINGS OF CALCUTTA

THE STYLE OF KALIGHAT

BY W. G. ARCHER

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
1953

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Foreword

KALIGHAT PAINTING, which is the subject of this monograph, is a type of Indian art which bears the same relation to Mughal and Rajput miniatures as do Japanese colour-prints to the scroll-paintings of the classical schools. Not only are the pictures an invaluable key to popular Indian interests but they reveal the Indian feeling for line, form and rhythm in its least inhibited guise.

During the last two years, the Museum's collection has been greatly enlarged and it is now one of the most representative in existence. The present monograph by Mr W. G. Archer, Keeper of the Indian Section, draws attention to the more significant aspects of the style and traces, for the first time, the origins and development of this important type of painting.

LEIGH ASHTON,
Director

Victoria & Albert Museum
January, 1953

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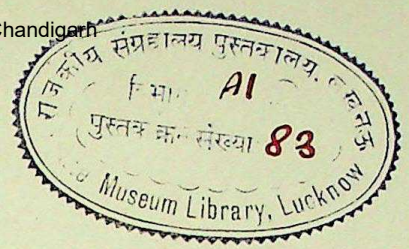

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COVER: *Woman with Roses* by Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh, Kalighat, Period IV, *c.* 1900. Victoria and Albert Museum (Series (17), I.S. 31–1952).

Note on Pronunciation

Kalighat: 'a' as in 'car', 'i' as if 'ee'.

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I AM DEEPLY INDEBTED to Mr James Laver for dating and identifying certain Anglo-Indian costumes, to Mrs Mildred Archer, Mr Charles Gibbs-Smith and Mr and Mrs John Irwin for valuable criticisms, and to Dr A. F. L. Beeston and Mr H. J. Stooke for allowing me prolonged access to the Kalighat paintings in the collection of the Indian Institute, Oxford. I must also express my deep gratitude to the Trustees, Leverhulme Fellowships with whose assistance part of this research was carried out; and to Dr Humayun Kabir who accompanied me on my first visit to Kalighat in 1932 and generously helped me in enquiries. In the preparation of the catalogue I have been greatly aided by the devoted work of Miss B. E. Allen and Mr R. W. Skelton, Assistants in the Department.

Grateful acknowledgements are due to the following owners, institutions and authorities for their courtesy in permitting the reproduction of the following pictures: Dr O. W. Samson (Fig. 7), the Indian Institute, Oxford (Figs. 16, 17, 20–5), Mr J. C. French (Fig. 45), Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and India Office Library (Figs. 46 and 47).

May 1952 W. G. ARCHER

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Introduction

ON the 8th of August 1917, Rudyard Kipling presented the Victoria and Albert Museum with a series of water-colour paintings of Hindu gods and goddesses. These pictures were not the first of their kind to reach the Museum, but owing, perhaps, to association with Kipling the gift drew attention to what had hitherto been a neglected type of Indian art. The pictures were painted by the *patuas* or bazaar artists of Kalighat, Calcutta and had been produced for mass sale to the pilgrims who thronged the Kalighat temple. They supplied a different kind of public from the Mughal and Rajput aristocracy, and for this reason appeared to be a more democratic form of expression. But it was not only in their conditions of production that the pictures were novel; their style also marked a radical departure from prevailing conceptions. With their bounding lines and bold rhythms they were obviously close to the ancient murals of Ajanta and Bagh, while the same qualities of line and rhythm, linked with powerful colour, displayed a surprising affinity with modern art. The work of Fernand Léger[1] was a particularly striking analogy, for here were the same bold simplifications, the same robust and tubular forms. The Kipling pictures, in fact, were not only a new kind of Indian art but one which had seemingly antedated some of the most audacious inventions of the modern epoch.

At about the same time, critics in India also became aware of the Kalighat school. Prominent among them was Ajit Ghose, and in an article contributed to the Indian art journal, *Rupam*, in October 1926, he declared that its achievements were of the highest artistic merit.

> 'There is an exquisite freshness and spontaneity of conception and execution in these old brush drawings', he wrote. 'They are not drawn with the meticulous perfection which gives such distinction to Mughal portraiture. They have not the studied elegance and striving after effect of the charmingly sensitive later drawings of the Kangra school with which they are contemporary. But there is a boldness and vigour in the brush line which may be compared to Chinese calligraphy. The drawing is made with one long sweep of the brush in which not the faintest suspicion of even a momentary indecision, not the slightest tremor can be detected. Often the line takes in the whole figure in such a way that it defies you to say where the artist's brush first touched the paper or where it finished its work. Indeed the line work can hardly be improved upon. Though drawn firmly and unerringly, not only is there no lack of flexibility in their draughtsmanship but there is indeed an exquisite sensibility.'

The affinities of Kalighat pictures with those of certain modern artists were also not lost upon Ghose and he claimed that some of their productions 'anticipated by a century or more cubism and impressionism'.[2]

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Such a school, at once so Indian and yet so modern, compels us to face some unexpected facts for, despite its marked dissimilarity from British art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the style was actually a by-product of the British connection and can only be understood against that background. The first evidence for its existence occurs in a volume published in 1832. This book, *Manners in Bengal*, by Mrs S. C. Belnos, was a series of pictures illustrating 'native scenes' and in her general preface, it was explained how being 'a native of the country' the author had attempted to depict some 'peculiarities of its customs and ceremonies'.

> 'Every plate', she wrote, 'is executed from sketches after nature which I made chiefly during my pedestrian excursions in the interior of the country, on the banks of the Ganges where the restraints which confine respectable Europeans to the palkee are laid aside and they can enjoy in uninterrupted freedom the contemplation of the various scenes presented by the country and its inhabitants to their view.'

Among these pictures is one entitled *Interior of a Native Hut* where a woman is shown cooking by an earthen hearth (Fig. 50). Mrs Belnos explains that the hut 'is supposed to belong to a Hindoo whose earnings just enable him to possess a neat little hut with a thatched roof supported by bamboos and mud walls. The furniture', she adds, 'consists of low beds, small stools, a chest or two, a Hookah of coconut shell on a brass stand, a stone or earthen image of their great deity Jughernauth' and finally 'a few ill-executed paintings on paper done by the natives representing some of their gods and goddesses, such as Krishna, Radah, Siva, Doorga'.[3] It is this last remark which is of special significance for, in the plate itself, one of these paintings illustrating Siva is clearly depicted. Although Mrs Belnos does not seem to have correctly copied the figure, her sketch is unmistakably based on a Kalighat picture. We can assume, therefore, that by, at any rate, 1830, Kalighat pictures were in active production, and for reasons which will presently be clear we can conclude that the school itself had probably started some twenty years earlier.

The circumstances which prompted this development were the growth of Calcutta as a large industrial city and the presence in it of a powerful British community. Throughout the eighteenth century, the British settlement on the Hooghly River had been rapidly expanding. Mansions in eighteenth-century style had been erected and although the first streets were over ten miles distant from Kalighat itself, the steady expansion of the colony gradually brought the temple into intimate association with the city. The primary purpose of Calcutta had always been to trade, but industrial enterprises were also started and among the commodities which came to be manufactured in increasing quantities was an article of special importance for artists—paper of a quality which was both cheaper and thinner than the indigenous hand-made paper. Without this steady

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supply, Kalighat painting could hardly have come into existence. With it, the school was able to capture a vast and popular market.

But besides this economic stimulus, Calcutta was responsible for formative influences of much greater significance. By the end of the eighteenth century it had become the most important clearing house in India for British pictures. Many of these were oils, but in addition engravings and aquatints were readily selling. Amateur artists existed among the European residents and there was probably a greater production of work in the European manner than anywhere else in India.[4] The chief British medium was water-colour—as against the tempera employed by indigenous artists, while in subject matter there was another major departure from Indian traditions. Instead of illustrating religious or romantic subjects or portraying the Indian nobility, British painting concentrated on landscapes and scenes of everyday life, the latter ranging from 'native characters and festivals' to local plants and animals. There is no evidence that Calcutta ever possessed an important school of Company painting[5]—the painting done for European patrons by Indian artists in a half-Indian half-European manner—but in one significant respect—the illustration of birds, beasts and flowers—it became a notable centre. As early as 1770–90, distinguished Europeans such as Sir Elijah and Lady Impey, Mrs Wheler (the wife of a Member of the Supreme Council of Bengal) and Nathaniel Middleton had all employed Indian artists to record local fauna and flora—Pennant going so far as to refer to Middleton's 'great treasure of Asiatic drawings of quadrupeds, birds, fishes and vegetables'. Under Wellesley,[6] artists were engaged to make a systematic survey of Indian plants, animals, fishes and insects—versions of which, in twenty-seven massive folios, are preserved in the India Office Library. He also founded a menagerie at Barrackpore in 1804, and the following year the birds and animals were carefully portrayed by an Indian artist working under Francis Buchanan's direction. A Botanic Garden had also been established and from 1793, first under Roxburgh (1793–1813) and then under Wallich (1817–46), Indian painters made a systematic record of Indian plants. All these studies were carried out under British direction. The medium was water-colour and the technique was the same as that employed by British artists in Europe for similar purposes.

The existence of all this British work gave a new definition to art in Eastern India. It was not merely that the most influential public was British or that a few indigenous artists had succumbed to an alien medium. The British style carried with it the vast prestige of a new and flourishing community. It was the counterpart in painting of Anglo-Indian architecture and like the latter it received the same measure of acceptance. Moreover, although the pictures were originally designed for purely British enjoyment, the high British death-rate and the constant movement of British personnel resulted in the frequent sale of 'gentlemen's

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effects' and their consequent diffusion through the neighbouring population. Many of these articles were doubtless bought by other Europeans, but at least a proportion also passed to Indian ownership. It is not surprising, therefore, that from the end of the eighteenth century British water-colours and prints were found in the bazaars and Thomas Daniell goes so far as to say, in 1788, that 'the commonest bazaar is full of prints—and Hodges' *Indian Views* are selling off by cart loads'.[7] Such a volume of work inevitably had repercussions on indigenous practice and when Kalighat paintings first appear, in the early nineteenth century, some of their most salient characteristics can only be explained as the result of British influence. Their most significant innovation—the use of water-colour[8]—is clearly a carry-over from the British technique, for in this respect the break with the former traditions of Indian artists is complete. The method of treating forms derives from a similar source, for every contour is shaded in a way which stands in utter contrast to indigenous work. In scale also, each picture is a counterpart of the plant and animal studies made for Europeans. Ordinary measurements are seventeen inches by eleven inches and these are not only considerably larger than those of Indian pictures but are approximately the same as those of the plant and animal studies in the Wellesley folios. Moreover, as in all these studies of flora and fauna, the subject is depicted on a blank sheet and there is no attempt to fill in the space with either a background or a wash of colour. But it is even more in their themes and subjects that the decisive influence of British models is apparent. As was only to be expected in pictures designed for sale to pilgrims, many were solely concerned with deities. But side by side with religious subjects, there appear scenes of contemporary life of a kind current in British water-colours. Seated ladies and musicians take their place beside the gods and goddesses while, even more significantly, studies of fishes, snakes, birds and animals are also included. The latter had made a brief appearance in Indian art under the Emperor Jahangir (1605–1627) but throughout the rest of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had attracted little attention. There is no evidence that they were used by the provincial Mughal artists who flourished in Bengal under Ali Vardi Khan.[9] Equally, there is no evidence that these subjects had ever been treated by the *patuas* of Bengal or were in any way a normal part of their native traditions. No ritualistic or religious considerations account for their inclusion and we must therefore assume that they entered Kalighat painting solely as a result of the British example. All these circumstances point to only one conclusion—that Kalighat painting originated in the early years of the nineteenth century and that it was a product of the special conditions then obtaining in Calcutta.

Yet if the school presupposes this Anglo-Indian source, its final character is so un-British that other influences must obviously have affected its development. And in this connection the fact that none of the early Kalighat painters are known

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to have practised for the British is of some significance. The artists who executed plant and animal studies were either up-country Kayasths from Patna or Murshidabad, or Muhammadan descendants of former Mughal artists.[10] Kalighat painters, on the other hand, were Bengali Hindus of the *patua* community. We know from oral tradition that two of the most prominent, in the second half of the nineteenth century, were the brothers Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh and Kali Charan Ghosh, both of whom died in 1930 aged over eighty. Other important Kalighat artists were Nilmani Das, Balaram Das and Gopal Das.[11] None of these is known to have been employed by the British and it is obvious therefore that profound as was the influence of Anglo-Indian art on the inception of the school, this influence must be attributed more to some casual acquaintance with Anglo-Indian pictures than to any direct training in the British technique. One further possibility cannot be excluded: that certain artists may have watched Europeans sketching by the temple and noticed that they employed a distinctive medium. But such observation can only have been from a distance and is hardly likely to have resulted in any definite form of instruction. It is not surprising, therefore, that in adopting the British medium, the Kalighat painters availed themselves only of its more obvious characteristics, while other circumstances led them to make new and vital alterations.

The most important circumstance which determined their adjustments was the actual conditions under which the painters worked. The temple of Kali had been built in the seventeenth century on a desolate strip of marshland near the Ganges. Despite its lonely situation, it had rapidly become a place of pilgrimage and although the principal festival was on the second day of the Durga puja, in the early autumn, it was customary for pilgrims to visit the centre throughout the year. As the temple's fame increased, a small settlement had grown up in the neighbourhood. Stalls and booths had been erected and a brisk trade had developed in pilgrims' souvenirs such as wooden dolls and earthenware figures. It was this trade which came to include water-colour pictures in the early nineteenth century. The amount of money available for the purchases was normally small, for the pilgrims were rarely people of lavish means. A trade in pictures was possible, therefore, only on the most modest of foundations. A picture at one rupee would obviously seem too costly to one whose monthly earnings were little more than five. Whatever form the style might take, then, it was necessary that the finished product should be saleable at a small and insignificant figure. The actual charges, as we know from later evidence, ranged from a pice to one anna,[12] the equivalents in English money of a farthing and a penny. These prices were quite incompatible with minute and laboured delicacy and in fact the only possible style was one which enabled pictures to be produced with brisk rapidity. As a corollary, invention itself had also to be confined to the creation of

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suitable prototypes and once these were devised the process of picture-making had necessarily to consist merely in their rapid duplication. These circumstances could not of themselves have created the style, but there can be little doubt that the use of broad and sweeping curves and the employment of ruthless simplifications were all encouraged by this stark and basic necessity.

Such economic factors must undoubtedly have helped to condition the style but to explain the precise form which the painting took we must bear in mind one further influence—the earlier traditions of the *patua* community. Apart from the painting of wooden dolls and earthenware figures, it had long been customary for some of its members to act as artist-minstrels, entertaining the villagers with Hindu ballads and painted scrolls. These scroll paintings owed nothing to Mughal influence, and since they were executed in conditions of peaceful leisure the style had none of the curving exuberance of the Kalighat pictures. Yet important affinities are none the less present. Each form is given a sharp firm outline and although the treatment is entirely flat, there is a continual regard for rhythm. Emotional attitudes are expressed through violent distortions and there is a constant predilection for deep intense greens, savage glowing reds, eloquent browns and rich blues.[13] Between these scrolls and Kalighat paintings are certain marked differences, but the earlier tradition is undoubtedly the source of the powerful colours, the stressed contours and primitive distortions which in spite of its many Anglo-Indian elements made the school of Kalighat so basically un-British.

Against this general background we must now consider, in greater detail, the history of the style. In the earliest series which has so far come to light, a series which can be safely dated to about the year 1830, the effects of all these different factors can be clearly seen. In 1830, the painters were evidently still in process of mastering the alien medium and adjusting it to their earlier traditions. The result is that while the later style is already present in broad essentials, it is over-tempered by respect for Anglo-Indian models. The colouring is strong and vital, yet compared with later productions has a certain diluted air, as if the influence of English water-colours with their tepid sombre hues were still too strong to be ignored. Compositions are boldly conceived but the sensitive, almost timid care with which they are executed, suggests that the animal painters with their meticulous accuracy were an inhibiting influence. In yet another way the over-close presence of Anglo-Indian models can be recognized. The Anglo-Indian device of shading is incorporated in the paintings, but its *rationale* is only partly understood. Instead of being fully rounded, the forms in early Kalighat pictures give the impression of being only shallow plaques—shadow falling on both sides of the object at once. As a result, far from suggesting three-dimensional qualities, shading exists only to stress the outlines and enhance the general rhythms. Finally, in subject matter, Anglo-Indian art with its predilection for scenes of

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country life, for Europeans hunting and pig-sticking and for the picturesque in its varied Indian forms had clearly exerted a powerful fascination. Europeans themselves are accordingly introduced into some of these studies and we see, in one picture, an Englishman dressed in top-hat and cut-a-ways shooting a tiger from an elephant (Fig. 1), while in another three jockeys are urging their horses into a furious gallop (Fig. 2).

As the school develops, these peculiarities of detail vanish. Anglo-Indian influences weaken and while each picture continues to be painted with neat precision, the general organization grows perceptibly sharper. Shading is no longer treated as an awkward novelty, a slightly cumbrous means of enhancing rhythm. Its aesthetic possibilities are fully realized, and its primary purpose—the creation of a sense of volume—is better understood. As a result, it is no longer confined to the stressing of contours but skilful gradations of tone are used to suggest the fully rounded character of the human form.

Paintings of this kind dominate the school until about the year 1870. By then, the pilgrim market had been fully captured, production had been vastly expanded and the style had achieved new levels of rhythmical expression. A crisis, however, was fast approaching and we can gauge its character from an account by T. N. Mukharji, an official of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, written in 1888:

> Until recently a superior kind of water-colour paintings were executed in Bengal by a class of people called the *patuas*, whose trade also was to paint idols for worship. These paintings were done with minute care and considerable taste was evinced in the combination and arrangement of colours. The industry is on the decline owing to cheaper coloured lithograph representations of Gods and Goddesses turned out by the ex-students of the Calcutta School of Art having appeared in the market. A painting in the old style can still be had, by order, at a price of Rs 10 and upwards. The *patuas* now paint rude 'daubs' which are sold by thousands in stalls near the shrine of Kalighat in the neighbourhood of Calcutta as also in other places of pilgrimage and public fairs. The subjects are usually mythological, but of late they have taken to making pictures representing a few comical features of Indian life. Such pictures are generally sold at a price ranging from a pice to an anna. The following is a typical list: Kali, Radha Krishna, Jagadhatri, the Mother of the World, Goddess of Learning, Woman fetching water, Milking.[14]

Mukharji's account is obviously not a full analysis of the situation and in one important respect—the evaluation of the style—his sentences have a somewhat Victorian ring. They are, none the less, significant, for besides being the only early account of the Kalighat school which has so far come to light, they accurately suggest the developments which did in fact occur. The earlier, more finished productions seem now to have lapsed and while the basic designs are still continued, actual execution is characterized by a considerably ruder energy. Silver paint which was formerly used to define contours is resorted to more

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sparingly. There is no longer the early sense of chiselled precision, and brush lines are in general much bolder and more impulsive. There is, in fact, an even greater tendency towards simplification and while in some cases this undoubtedly led to a certain crude coarseness, it also resulted in the release of compensating qualities. More forcibly than in the early phases we now obtain an expression of the Indian ideal of human form. Throughout Sanskrit, Hindi and Bengali literature, a certain sumptuous magnificance had been demanded of the female body and it is precisely this conception which now inspires the artists. The great sweeping curves which evoke the human shape may well have started as a kind of pictorial economy—a simplification forced upon them by the need to produce the pictures more rapidly and in even greater quantities. But the result is something more vital and significant—the untrammelled expression of a national ideal.

More significant of the crisis, however, is a change in subject-matter. Scenes of contemporary life had throughout been part of the *patuas*' repertoire, but until 1870 it was an interest in documentation which explained such themes as a cat with a prawn (Fig. 21), a mouse peep-show (Fig. 20), or an Englishman shooting at a tiger (Fig. 1). From 1870 onwards a note of criticism appears and it is hardly possible to doubt that, faced with contemporary developments such as the oleograph, the camera and the printed news-sheet, developments which threatened their means of livelihood, the *patuas* gave subconscious vent to their fears and resentment. This resentment takes the form not of an attack on the machine as such, but rather as an intense aversion from the kind of society created by the modern age. During the years 1870–1900, Bengali society, particularly in Calcutta, went through an exaggeratedly anti-national phase. The older, more orthodox forms of conduct were despised and the kind of behaviour represented by a pilgrimage to a temple was ridiculed as out of date. British fashions and manners were self-consciously aped and the result was what C. R. Das was later to deride as 'a hybrid Englishman'. It was on to the social behaviour of this arrogant society that the Kalighat painters now fastened—expressing by means of social satire their own bitterness at the economic forces which were rapidly destroying them. New themes accordingly make their appearance. The sense that 'the age itself is evil' is reflected in priests shown closeted with prostitutes or serving sentences of imprisonment.[15] The decay in traditional values is seen in the emphasis placed upon indolence at home. Women are shown lying languidly at ease, wooed by foppish admirers or frantically embracing Westernized lovers (Fig. 36). The ascendancy of 'modern' woman is shown in pictures of a lover being trampled on by his mistress or bowing at her feet (Figs. 37 and 42). To the more orthodox members of Hindu society who still attended the Kalighat temple, such conduct must have seemed the acme of vicious living and its exposure in the paintings a timely vindication of older values. The most revealing development,

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however, concerns a theme which was calculated to appeal even more strongly to orthodox pilgrims—the threat to family life occasioned by modern developments. Pictures were therefore made showing scenes of domestic friction and in particular of husbands slaying their wives (Figs. 34 and 35). It is not orthodox husbands and wives, however, who appear in these disturbing scenes but only those who are unmistakably the products of the modern age. The husband who attacks his wife holds in one hand a chopper but in the other, an umbrella. The wife who is about to be attacked crouches on the floor but near her is a European hand-bag. The moral is obvious, for it is the hand-bag and the umbrella—the typical paraphernalia of Western life—which symbolize the disruption caused by the aping of Western manners and hint at the sources of friction. But we can hardly doubt that in these scenes of violence there is yet another situation—the plight of the artists themselves and their futile struggles to avert extinction.

The last phase of Kalighat painting occurs in the years 1890–1930. Bold simplifications continued to be the rule and in a desperate attempt to cheapen production, line-drawings as well as woodcuts were also produced. But the times themselves were against any prolonged survival. In other occupations than art, the Indian industrial revolution had destroyed the hand-worker. The oleograph and the printed picture were now so general that hand-painting seemed out of date. In 1920 almost all the descendants of the original artists had ceased to paint and by 1930 the school had ended.

Yet although the *patuas* themselves no longer painted, the style itself was far from finished, for following the discovery of modern Western art by critics and artists, the school came suddenly to be valued by an entirely different public. Under E. B. Havell's guidance, artists at the Government School of Art had returned to Mughal and Ajanta painting as the only means of achieving Indian forms of expression. The movement had resulted in a strangely hybrid type of art, for which the best analogy is the pre-Raphaelite school in England. The reason for this outcome lay in the fact that current knowledge of traditional Indian painting was limited and many vital styles were inevitably ignored. Moreover, knowledge of the art of other countries was still so meagre that canons of artistic taste were undeveloped. As more and more Indians visited Europe and books on art reached India, these early ideas began to alter, and while the complete discovery of the Indian tradition had still to be achieved, Mughal painting was increasingly regarded as only 'an episode'.[16] The bias in favour of representation vanished and artistic styles of Rajputana, the Punjab Hills and of rural Bengal were recognized as authentic expressions of the national spirit. Against this background, Kalighat painting acquired a fresh significance. Its quality of simplification was recognized as an outstanding merit since by this means figures were imbued with a new dignity and grandeur. The rhythmical

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verve of the pictures, their exhilarating colour and strong contours seemed part of that 'search for intensity' which in France had already captured modern painting. For one outstanding artist trained at the Government School of Art, Calcutta—Jamini Roy—its discovery precipitated a style of painting which, while remaining linear and monumental, was to prove even more subtly expressive of Indian sensibility (Fig. 44).[17] Later still, in about the year 1940, its rapid and summary brushwork led a younger artist, Gopal Ghose, to develop a style of impulsive impressionism.[18] Such influences may appear, for the moment, to have been exhausted; but unless there is an unexpected revolution in Indian aesthetic taste, the school is likely to remain for many years a vital and creative stimulus to Indian art.

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Notes

1 For an example of a painting by Fernand Léger, see Fig. 43. For other examples as well as for a discussion of his place in modern art, see Herbert Read, *Art Now* (London, 1933), R. H. Wilenski, *Modern French Painters* (London, 1940), Douglas Cooper, *Fernand Léger* (Geneva, 1949) as well as *Cahiers d'Art* (Paris), Vols. VIII (1933), XX–XXI (1945–6) and XXIV (1949).

2 Ajit Ghose, 'Old Bengal Paintings', *Rupam*, Nos. 27–8, (July to October, 1926), 98–104. The whole of Ajit Ghose's article should be consulted.

3 Mrs S. C. Belnos, *Twenty-four Plates Illustrative of Hindoo and European Manners in Bengal* (London, 1832)—Preface and Notes to Plate 14.

4 For an indication of the range of British art in India, see Sir William Forster, 'British Artists in India, 1760–1820', Walpole Society, Vol. XIX (1930–1), and Graham Reynolds, 'British Artists in India', *The Art of India and Pakistan* (London, 1950), 183–191.

5 An aspect of Company Painting—the school of Patna—is discussed by Mildred Archer, *Patna Painting* (Royal India Society, London, 1947).

6 The Marquess Wellesley (1760–1842), brother of the future Duke of Wellington. Governor-General of India, May 1798 to July 1805.

7 Thomas Daniell, letter to Ozias Humphrey, dated 7 November 1788 (quoted M. Hardie and M. Clayton, 'Thomas Daniell, William Daniell', *Walker's Quarterly* (London, 1932), Nos. 35–6, 26.

8 The consistently basic medium in Kalighat painting is water-colour but in certain instances body colour is also used. There is no recourse to tempera.

9 It is important to note that under Ali Vardi Khan (1740–56), Murshidabad was the centre of administration in Bengal. It was only towards the end of the eighteenth century and then only as a result of British rule that Calcutta became the capital.

10 The names of artists employed on plant, animal and bird studies have in certain cases been preserved. In the case of the Impey collection of plant drawings (Linnaean Society Library), executed between 1774 and 1780, a number of sheets bear the names of the artists Ram Das and Bhawani Das, both being recorded as 'natives of Patna'. There is also the name of a Muhammadan, Sheikh Zain-al-Din. The collection of 2,500 plant studies, the *Roxburgh Icones*, made between 1793 and 1813 and still preserved in the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta, also contains the names of artists—the most common being those of such typical Bihari Kayasths as Vishnu Prasad and Mahangu Lal.

11 The names of the Kalighat artists, Nilmani Das, Balaram Das and Gopal Das, with illustrations of their work, are recorded in Ajit Ghose, *op. cit.*

12 For the prices at which Kalighat paintings were sold, see T. N. Mukharji, *Art Manufactures of India* (Calcutta, 1888), page 20, where the current prices are given at between one pice and one anna. These rates are confirmed by inscriptions on the pictures, on loose sheets, in the Monier Williams Collection (Indian Institute, Oxford), each of which possesses a separate label noting its price in English as one anna.

13 For an example of the rural *patua* tradition, see Fig. 45. Scroll-paintings from the Murshidabad and Midnapore districts of West Bengal, on loan from Mr J. C. French, are also in the Indian Section. For further references, see Bibliography.

14 T. N. Mukharji, *ibid.*, 20.

15 For examples of priestly vice as shown in Kalighat painting, see Mukul Dey 'Drawings and Paintings of Kalighat', *Advance* (Calcutta, 1932) where two pictures are reproduced illustrating (1) a Vaishnava guru consorting with a prostitute and (2) a convict priest in prison. The theme of the convict priest is also represented in the Museum's collection (Series (10), I.M. 138–1914).

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16 The phrase, 'an episode', as applied to Mughal painting, occurs at the end of Coomaraswamy's brilliant *apologia* for Rajput art. This art, he stressed, was essentially linear.

> A vigorous archaic outline is the basis of its language. Uncompromising as the golden rule of art and life desired by Blake, sensitive, reticent and tender, it perfectly reflects the self-control and sweet serenity of Indian life and the definite theocratic and aristocratic organization of Indian society. It lends itself to the utterance of serene passion and the expression of unmixed emotions.
>
> Mughal art, on the other hand, is secular, intent upon the present moment, and profoundly interested in individuality. It is not an idealization of life but a refined and accomplished representation of a very magnificent phase of it. Its greatest successes are achieved in portraiture and in the representation of courtly pomp and pageantry. All its themes are worldly and though sheer intensity of observation—passionate delineation—sometimes raises individual works to the highest possible rank, yet the subject matter of Mughal art as such is of purely aristocratic interest.
>
> As against this, 'Rajput art is hieratic and popular and often essentially mystic.'

And he concludes:

> Mughal art, however magnificent its brief achievement, was but an episode in the long history of Indian painting; Rajput painting belongs to the main stream.

(A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting* (Oxford, 1912), 4–6.

17 For discussions of Jamini Roy and his place in modern Indian art, see Shahid Suhrawardy, 'The Art of Jamini Roy', *Prefaces* (Calcutta, 1938), Sudhindranath Datta, 'Jamini Roy', *Longmans Miscellany* (Calcutta, 1943), John Irwin and Bishnu Dey, *Jamini Roy* (Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta, 1944), Mrs E. M. Milford, 'A Modern Primitive', *Horizon* (London, 1944), Vol. X, and Shahid Suhrawardy 'Jamini Roy', *Marg* (Bombay, 1948), Vol. II, No. 1.

18 For a note on Gopal Ghose with reproductions of his work, see *Marg*, Vol. V., No. 1.

Bibliography

1. Belnos, Mrs S. C. Twenty-four Plates Illustrative of Hindoo and European Manners in Bengal (London, 1832). The first book to illustrate a Kalighat painting *in situ* and to give a short account of 'native drawings on paper' in the Calcutta area.

2. Mukharji, T. N. 'The Art Industries of Bengal', *Journal of Indian Art*, January, 1886. Contains the following short reference: '*Paintings of Classical Subjects.*—There are two classes of mythological paintings characterized by superior and inferior work. The ancient style of paintings of the former class was curious and Indian in execution. The art still exists at Jaypur. The inferior class of pictures is done by the painter caste, the *patuas*, and is sold by thousands at places of pilgrimage, like Kalighat and Tarakeswar and at local fairs, at prices ranging from one pice to one anna each.'

3. Mukharji, T. N. *Art-Manufactures of India* (Calcutta, 1888), 20. A longer account, quoted in the text.

4. Havell, E. B. 'Fundamentals of Indian Art', *Rupam*, Numbers 27–8 (July–October 1926), 74–7. Refers to (5) and stresses the affinity, in 'the strong rhythmic flow of line', between Kalighat painting and the murals of Bagh and Ajanta.

5. Ghose, Ajit. 'Old Bengal Paintings', *Rupam*, Numbers 27–8 (July–October 1926), 98–104. Reproduces line-drawings—*The Sleeper* (by Nilmani Das), *Kaliya Damana* (perhaps by Balaram Das, though the attribution is not entirely clear) and *Jasoda milking a Cow with the child Krishna* (by Gopal Das)—three Kalighat artists of the late nineteenth century. Contains a vivid appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of Kalighat art.

6. Smith, Vincent A. *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (2nd edition. Revised by K. de B. Codrington. Oxford, 1930), 226. Contains the following reference: 'Apart from the work of the court painters, much work exists which is the product of bazaar schools. Of these the

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Calcutta brush drawings in colour of the *patua* caste are especially notable for their vigorous line.' Reproduces (Plate 162B) the line-drawing of *Kaliya Damana* illustrated by Ghose in (5).

7. DEY, Mukul. 'Drawings and Paintings of Kalighat', *Advance* (Calcutta, 1932). A newspaper article reproducing six drawings and six paintings. Describes the artist colony at Kalighat as the writer knew it in about the year 1910.

8. DUTT, G. S. 'The Tigers' God in Bengal Art', *The Modern Review* (Calcutta, November 1932). Discusses rural *patua* painting in Eastern Bengal, Birbhum and the Santal Parganas.

9. DUTT, G. S. 'The Indigenous Painters of Bengal', *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art,* Vol. I, No. 1, 1933. A plea for a return by modern Bengali artists to indigenous traditions. Notes that 'a certain amount of interest' has already been aroused by 'the fine line-drawings of the Kalighat school'. Goes on to discuss rural *patua* painting in West Bengal.

10. MOOKERJEE, Ajitcoomar. *Folk Art of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1939). Discusses rural *patua* painting in Bengal, reproducing six examples. There is no reference, however, to the art of Kalighat.

11. MOOKERJEE, Ajitcoomar. 'Kalighat Folk Painters', Horizon (London), Vol. V (1942), 417–18. Reproduces three paintings—*Lady Sleeping* (*c.* 1900), *Mendicant with Crow* (*c.* 1900), *The Sheep Husband* (*c.* 1900).

12. MILFORD, E. Mary. 'A Modern Primitive', *Horizon* (London), Vol. X, (1944), 338–42. A study of the modern Bengali artist, Jamini Roy. Discusses the influence on his work of Kalighat pictures. Reproduces two works by the artist—*Temple Offering* and *Cat with Crayfish*. For the latter, compare Fig. 21.

13. STOOKE, H. J. 'Kalighat Paintings in Oxford', *Indian Art and Letters*, Vol. XX (1946), 71–3. Lists the 109 Kalighat pictures in the Monier Williams collection, Indian Institute, Oxford. Reproduces four.

14. IRWIN, John. 'The Folk-Art of Bengal', *The Studio*, Vol. CXXXII, No. 644, November 1946, 129–36. Discusses rural *patua* painting in Bengal. Reproduces the line-drawing of *The Sleeper* illustrated by Ghose in (5).

15. GRAY, Basil. 'Painting', *The Art of India and Pakistan* (London, 1950), 197. Lists the three Kalighat paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition of the Art of India and Pakistan at Burlington House, London, in 1947–8.

16. ARCHER, W. G. 'Kalighat Painting', *Marg* (Bombay), Vol. V (1952), No. 4. Discusses the historical development of Kalighat painting and reproduces ten pictures, including six from the Monier Williams collection, Indian Institute, Oxford. One colour plate (W. G. Archer collection).

17. MOOKERJEE, Ajit. *Art of India* (Calcutta, 1952). Reproduces the Kalighat line-drawing, *The Sleeper* (*c.* 1880), illustrated in (5) and (14); the Kalighat painting, *Lady Sleeping* (*c.* 1900), illustrated in (11), and, in colour, a painting in tempera by Jamini Roy, *Head of Man*.

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List of Illustrations

PERIOD I: 1800–1850

1. *An Englishman on an Elephant, shooting at a Tiger.* Series (1), *c.* 1830. I.S. 209–1950.

2. *Jockeys horse-racing.* Series (1), *c.* 1830. I.S. 210–1950.

3. *Two Pigeons.* Series (1), *c.* 1830. I.S. 213–1950.

4. *Syamakantha fighting with the Tiger.* Series (1). *c.* 1830. I.S. 195–1950.

Syamakantha ('the dark-throated one') is a name for Siva, the third great member of the supreme Hindu Triad. His throat is dark from swallowing the poison which would otherwise have ended the world. His most frequent guise is that of an ascetic in which character he is shown wreathed in snakes and garbed in a tiger skin (see Fig. 17).

The tiger skin is said to have been acquired in the following manner. Siva, while visiting a colony of holy men, chanced to excite the loves of their wives. The holymen then dug a pit from which a huge tiger sprang with the object of killing him. Siva grappled with the tiger and at last, killed it. To mark his triumph, he made a practice of wearing a tiger's skin as loin cloth.

5. *Hanuman with Rama and Sita in his heart.* Series (1), *c.* 1830. I.S. 199–1950.

Hanuman is the celebrated monkey chief with supernatural powers, who figures in the great religious epic, the *Ramayana.* As leader of the monkey hosts, he assisted Rama, the hero incarnation of Vishnu, in quelling Ravana, the demon king of Ceylon. He also aided Rama in rescuing his wife, Sita, from Ravana's clutches. In the picture, he treasures in his heart the image of Rama and Sita to whose service he was devoted.

Vishnu is the second member of the great Hindu Triad.

6. *Vamana quelling Bali.* Series (2), *c.* 1845. D. 657–1889.

Bali, the small seated figure in the picture, was a pious king who by dint of penance and devotion had humbled the gods and achieved supremacy over the three worlds. The gods sought the aid of Vishnu to regain their lost power. Vishnu then manifested himself as Vamana, a dwarf incarnation and begged of Bali the boon of three steps of land. When this was granted, Vamana in two strides covered heaven and the earth, leaving uncrossed only the third world (the nether regions). In the picture, Bali is shown acknowledging Vamana's might. In recognition of his piety, the third world was granted to him.

7. *The Murder Trial; an Englishman dispensing justice. c.* 1845. From the collection of Dr O. W. Samson, London.

Trial of criminal cases by Englishmen was a common feature of Calcutta life after the assumption by the East India Company of responsibilities for law and order.

8. *Krishna killing Bakasura, the Heron Demon.* Series (2), *c.* 1845. D. 656–1889.

Krishna was the eighth incarnation of Vishnu.

Born in prison, he was smuggled out in order to avoid the vengeance of his uncle, Raja Kansa. He was brought up by his foster-parents, Nanda and Jasoda, spending his youth and early manhood among the cowherds and milkmaids of Brindaban. His romantic love-affair with Radha, a married girl, is a popular subject of poetry and is interpreted as symbolizing the claims of love over duty.

During his sojourn with the cowherds, Krishna killed many demons, among them Bakasura, the Heron Demon illustrated in the picture.

9. *Radha at Krishna's feet.* Series (2), *c.* 1830. D. 661–1889.

Radha, adoring Krishna, is interpreted as the soul abasing itself before the divine.

10. *The Jackal Raja's Court.* Series (3), *c.* 1845. 08144b. A scene from Bengali folklore.

11. *The Seated Musician.* Series (3), *c.* 1845. 08144a.

The instrument which the musician is playing is a sitar—many examples of which are in the Museum's collection.

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PERIOD II : 1850–1870

12. *Celestial Lady with a Stag.* Series (5), *c.* 1860. I.M. 2/82–1917.

13. *Narasimha rending the Demon King.* Series (5), *c.* 1860. I.M. 2/78–1917.

Narasimha is the Lion-man incarnation of Vishnu. The demon king, Hiranyakasipu, had attempted to kill his son, Prahlada, who claimed that Vishnu was everywhere. The king asked his son if Vishnu was present even in the stone pillars of the hall. To vindicate Prahlada and assert his might, Vishnu at once took the form of a lion-man, issued from a pillar and tore the king to pieces.

14. *Krishna and Balarama.* Series (5), *c.* 1860. I.M. 2/62–1917.

Balarama, the lighter-hued of the two figures, was the elder brother of Krishna and shared many of his exploits.

15. *The Goddess Ganga.* Series (5), *c.* 1860. I.M. 2/61–1917.

Ganga is the presiding deity of the sacred River Ganges and is usually portrayed mounted on her vehicle, a crocodile. Her worship formed part of the Tantric system which exalted the feminine nature of the supreme Power.

16. *Snake eating a Fish. c.* 1860. From the Monier Williams coll. Indian Institute, Oxford.

17. *Siva as Mahayogi. c.* 1860. From the Monier Williams collection, Indian Institute, Oxford.

Siva, as third member of the Hindu Triad, is described by Dowson as representing 'the destroying principle, though his powers and attributes are more numerous and much wider. Under the name of Rudra or Mahakala, he is the great dissolving and destroying power. But destruction in Hindu belief implies reproduction; so as Siva or Sankara, "the auspicious", he is the reproductive power which is perpetually restoring that which had been dissolved, and hence he is regarded as Iswara, the supreme lord and Mahadeva, the great god. Under this character of restorer he is represented by his symbol the Linga or phallus, typical of reproduction; and it is under this form alone, or combined with the Yoni, or female organ, the representative of his Sakti or female energy, that he is everywhere worshipped. Thirdly, he is the Mahayogi, the great ascetic, in whom is centred the highest perfection of austere penance and abstract meditation, by which the most unlimited powers are attained, marvels and miracles are worked, the highest spiritual knowledge is acquired, and union with the great spirit of the universe is eventually gained.' (J. Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, London, 1928, 298). The present picture shows him in this last role.

18. *Women at a Shrine.* Series (5), *c.* 1860. I.M. 2/86–1917.

19. *Krishna and Balarama.* Series (6), *c.* 1865. I.S. 462–1950.

PERIOD III : 1870–1885

20. *The Mouse Peep-show. c.* 1880. From the Monier Williams coll. Indian Institute, Oxford.

21. *Cat with Prawn. c.* 1880. From the Monier Williams collection, Indian Institute, Oxford.

22. *Prawn and Rui Fish. c.* 1880. From the Monier Williams coll. Indian Institute, Oxford.

23. *Fishing Eagle. c.* 1880. From the Monier Williams collection, Indian Institute, Oxford.

24. *Syamakantha fighting with the Tiger. c.* 1880. From the Monier Williams collection, Indian Institute, Oxford.

Compare the earlier version in the Museum's collection (I.S. 195–1950, Fig. 4).

25. *Hand with a Bunch of Prawns. c.* 1880. From the Monier Williams coll. Ind. Inst., Oxford.

A woodcut, based on this design, is in the Museum's collection (I.S. 469–1950).

26. *Savitri, begging the God of Death to restore her Husband.* Series (7), *c.* 1880. I.S. 688–1950.

Savitri is held to embody the Hindu ideal of wifely devotion. When she was espoused, a seer warned her that her husband, Satyavan, had only one year to live. Savitri, none the less, married him and when the fated day arrived, she accompanied Satyavan to the forest and supported him as he died. When Yama, the God of Death, came to bear his spirit away, Savitri pleaded so movingly that Yama relented and Satyavan was restored.

27. *Nala and Damayanti.* Series (7), *c.* 1880. I.S. 668–1952.

Nala, a Hindu king, was married to Damayanti, a princess. As a result of gambling, he lost his whole property, even to his clothes. His

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rival then succeeded to the kingdom and Nala and his wife were forced to rove the forests. When birds flew away with Nala's only garment, he resolved to abandon Damayanti in the hope that she would return to her father's court. He accordingly removed her sole remaining garment while she slept, divided it in two, and left her. In the sequel, Nala regains his kingdom with the aid of a serpent ruler, and Damayanti receives a beatific reward for her wifely constancy.

In the picture, Nala is about to divide Damayanti's garment while she sleeps. A bird, with the face of his rival, watches from a tree.

28. *Siva as Ascetic and Musician.* Series (9), *c.* 1880. I.S. 3–1949.

29. *Siva on the Bull, Nandi.* Series (8), *c.* 1880. I.M. 2/190–1917.

The bull, Nandi, is the chief of Siva's personal attendants.

30. *Jasoda with the infant Krishna.* Series (10), *c.* 1880. I.M. 120–1914.

Jasoda was Krishna's foster-mother.

31. *Krishna at Jasoda's Breast.* Series (10), *c.* 1880. I.M. 119–1914.

32. *Siva as Ascetic and Musician.* Series (10), *c.* 1880. I.M. 118–1914.

33. *Hanuman with Rama and Sita in his Heart.* Series (10), *c.* 1880. I.M. 133–1914.

Contrast with the earlier version, Fig. 5.

34. *A Husband slaying his Westernized Wife.* Series (10), *c.* 1880. I.M. 140–1914. See p. 23.

Draped curtains also appear in Series (2), (6), (7) and (10) where they serve as backgrounds to Hindu deities as well as to scenes of contemporary life. Although deriving, in all probability, from rural peep-shows (see Fig. 20), it is more likely that they were actually included to provide more sumptuous settings than to give the idea of theatrical drama.

35. *A Husband slaying his Westernized Wife.* Series (11), by Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh, *c.* 1880. I.S. 25–1952. Line version of Fig. 34.

36. *Lovers embracing.* Series (11), by Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh, *c.* 1880. I.S. 24–1952.

PERIOD IV: 1885–1930

37. *The Suppliant Lover.* Series (17), by Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh, *c.* 1900. I.S. 33–1952.

Draft study, in pencil and water-colour. Unfinished.

38. *Woman with Sitar.* Series (17), by Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh, *c.* 1900. I.S. 30–1952.

39. *Woman with Mirror.* Series (17), by Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh, *c.* 1900. I.S. 29–1952.

40. *Woman dressing her Hair.* Series (18), by Kali Charan Ghosh, *c.* 1900. I.S. 37–1952.

41. *Krishna at Jasoda's Breast.* Series (18), by Kali Charan Ghosh, *c.* 1900. I.S. 40–1952.

Contrast with the earlier version, Fig. 31.

42. *Woman trampling on her Lover.* Series (18), by Kali Charan Ghosh, *c.* 1900. I.S. 39–1952.

PARALLELS, INFLUENCES AND SOURCES

43. *Fernand Léger.* Two Figures, 1923. *Cahiers d'Art,* Vol. VIII (1933).

44. *Jamini Roy.* Santal Girl, *c.* 1924. *Marg,* Vol. I (1947).

45. *The Combat of Hanuman.* Scroll—Painting, illustrating the *Ramayana,* by a rural *patua* artist. Murshidabad District, West Bengal, *c.* 1820. From the J. C. French collection, Worthing. (On loan to the Museum).

46. *Crawfish.* From a volume of Natural History drawings by an Indian artist working for the British, *c.* 1800. India Office Library (Mysore Drawings, 91 C. 4).

47. *Hoopoe.* From a volume of bird studies prepared for the Marquess Wellesley by Indian artists in Calcutta, *c.* 1802. India Office Library (91 C. 3).

48. *A Civilian going out.* Plate 23 from Mrs S. C. Belnos, *Manners in Bengal* (London, 1832). Compare Fig. 1.

49. *A Kutcherry or Magistrate's Court.* From Sir Charles D'Oyly, *The Bihar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbook,* 1828. Compare Fig. 7.

50. *Interior of a Native Hut.* Plate 14 from Mrs S. C. Belnos, *Manners in Bengal* (London, 1832).

The drawing of a Kalighat painting, attached to the wall, seems to have been based on the various Kalighat versions of Siva as Ascetic or Musician, Figs. 17, 28 and 32.

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A Short Catalogue

of the Kalighat Paintings in the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum

PERIOD I : 1800–1850

1. I.S. 192–1950 to I.S. 225–1950. A series of thirty-four pictures illustrating:

(a) Twenty-eight religious and mythological subjects including *Brahma, Radha and Krishna, Balarama, Hanuman with Rama and Sita in his heart* (I.S. 199–1950, Fig. 5), *Syamakantha fighting with the Tiger* (I.S. 195–1950, Fig. 4), *Siva and Parvati, Jagannath and Kali.*

(b) Two scenes from current Bengali life—*Two sepoys fighting* (I.S. 211–1950), *A Lady on a Chair* (I.S. 219–1950).

(c) A scene from Bengali folklore — *The Fish Supper* (I.S. 215–1950, Cf. W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), 125–28).

(d) Two scenes of Anglo-Indian life—*An Englishman on an Elephant* (I.S. 209–1950, Fig. 1), *Jockeys horse-racing* (I.S. 210–1950, Fig. 2).

(e) A study in Natural History—*Two Pigeons* (I.S. 213–1950, Fig. 3).

From a Roman Catholic Missionary College, acquired 1950.

The date of collection is unrecorded, but a series of pictures from Tanjore, also illustrating Hindu gods and goddesses, was offered for sale along with the series. The Tanjore examples bore a note in English stating that they reached the College in 1855. It is likely, however, that the Kalighat pictures were painted at least twenty-five years earlier. The jockeys (Fig. 2) wear the large peaked cap which was fashionable in 1820 but had already gone out of use ten years later. The Englishman on the elephant (Fig. 1) also wears the top-hat and cut-a-ways which were current between 1820 and 1830. Details of the painting also point to the fact that the series cannot be much later than about 1825—the pale and tepid colours, the chiselled precision of the execution, and the naïvely mannered use of shading (to emphasize contours rather than volume) all suggesting the influence of Anglo-Indian water-colours of the 1780–1820 period but in a still undigested form.

The series is further characterized by a plentiful use of silver pigment to indicate ornaments and tassels.

Kalighat, *c.* 1830.

2. D. 652–1889 to D. 667–1889. A series of sixteen pictures illustrating the following religious subjects—*Vamana quelling Bali* (D. 657–1889, Fig. 6), *Kali, Jagannath, Radha and Krishna, Krishna killing Bakasura* (D. 656–1889, Fig. 8), *Radha stroking Krishna's foot* (D. 661–1889, Fig. 9), *Saraswati, Ganga on an Alligator, Rama and Sita.*

Originally acquired from G. Wild, by the Department of E.I.D., 1889, and now on permanent loan to the Indian Section.

A series in deep rich colours, marked by suave decisive contours and by notably more skilful shading. Limbs are fully rounded but while bold simplifications are still employed, the general execution continues to evince considerable subtlety. As in (1), silver pigment is lavishly employed.

A picture (Fig. 7) in closely similar style, from the collection of Dr O. W. Samson, suggests that the series is of about the year 1845. In this picture, an Englishman is shown dispensing justice. A native lawyer pleads before him while a man charged with murder listens to a witness deposing to the crime in the grisly presence of the corpse. The Englishman's coat is obscured by the European table, but his top-hat is clearly visible and is in the fashion of about the year 1840. Assuming that the picture was based on contemporary models and allowing for the short time-lag in Anglo-Indian fashions, 1845 would therefore seem to be its probable date.

Kalighat, *c.* 1845.

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3. 08144a and b. I.S.

(a) *A Man sitting on a Chair, playing the Sitar* (Fig. 11).

(b) *The Jackal Raja's Court* (Fig. 10)—a scene from Bengali Folklore.

Transferred to the Indian Section from the India Office collection in 1879.

Two pictures similar in style and colouring to (2). European influence is noticeable in the chair on which the musician is seated while, in *The Jackal Raja's Court*, the jackal in the bottom right-hand corner wears the uniform of a midshipman, current in about the year 1830. Trees and foliage are executed in the same summary fashion as in (1) while the musician closely resembles in features the study of *Syamakantha fighting the tiger* (Fig. 4). Shading, however, is now employed to indicate volume.

Kalighat, *c.* 1845.

4. I.S. 5–1949. *The Goddess Kali.*

Acquired from the Church Missionary Society, through Mrs E. M. Milford, 1949.

Similar to (2) and (3).

PERIOD II: 1850–1870

5. I.M. 2–1917: Sub-numbers 61, 62, 72, 74–83, 85 and 86.

A series of fifteen pictures illustrating:

(a) Fourteen religious subjects including *Ganga on a Crocodile* (I.M. 2/61–1917, Fig. 15), *Krishna and Balarama* (I.M. 2/62–1917, Fig. 14), *Ravana abducting Sita, Siva and Parvati on the bull Nandi, Saraswati, Narasimha* (I.M. 2/78–1917, Fig. 13), *A Goddess in the form of a winged woman spearing a stag* (I.M. 2/82–1917, Fig. 12).

(b) A scene from Bengali life—*Women at a Shrine* (I.M. 2/86–1917, Fig. 18).

From the J. Lockwood Kipling collection, given by Rudyard Kipling, 1917.

The date on which these pictures were collected has unfortunately not been recorded. We know, however, that Rudyard Kipling's father, Lockwood Kipling, first went to India in 1865 and served, for the next ten years, as Architectural Sculptor at the Bombay School of Art. In 1875 he was made Principal of the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, and it was this post which he held until his retirement in 1893. During his stay in India, he contributed a number of articles on the Art-Manufactures of the Punjab to the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry* and also published a book, *Beast and Man in India* (London, 1891), analysing the representation in art of men and animals.

There is no mention in his writings, however, of Kalighat painting and it can only be presumed that it was during some casual visits to Calcutta between the years 1865 and 1893 that he obtained the pictures.

The collection falls into three parts—the present series of fifteen studies, a second group (Series 9) and a third (Series 14). The style of the last two sets would suggest that they were probably obtained sometime after 1880 and the possibility cannot be excluded that the present series was also purchased at that time. Such a circumstance, however, would not preclude their having been executed at an earlier date since Kalighat pictures were often obtainable at the stalls 20–30 years after they were painted. On the other hand, the present series might well have been bought soon after Lockwood Kipling's arrival in India and the second and third series shortly before his departure.

A similar collection—also in more than one part—was made by Sir Monier Williams during the course of three visits to India between the years 1860 and 1883. The purpose of these visits was to collect Indian materials and to 'obtain sympathy and help' for the starting of an Indian Institute at Oxford. The Institute was founded in 1883 and Monier Williams then presented to it a large library of Sanskrit and Hindi books together with more than one hundred Kalighat paintings. These pictures are clearly the products of more than one period—a set of twenty-eight in a bound book, entitled *Indian Gods* being exactly similar in style to the present Kipling set while the remainder, on loose sheets, corresponding more nearly to set (8). It is noteworthy that the bound book, while devoted almost entirely to religious subjects also includes the study of a snake (Fig. 16) while the loose sheets are notable for studies of animals, birds and fishes as well as for some satirical scenes of Bengali life. As in the case of Lockwood Kipling's collection, there is no proof that the two series were not collected at the same time but the marked differences in

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style suggest that the bound book was more probably obtained soon after 1860 and the loose sheets in about the year 1880.

In general style, the present series is obviously very close to (2), (3) and (4). There is the same minute finish, the same deft precision and the same control of subtly rounded forms. The rhythmical arrangement of limbs, however, seems to have achieved a greater flexibility, shading is used to give an even stronger effect of concavity and the forms have sometimes an almost tubular simplicity. In view of these latter tendencies it is therefore likely that the pictures are approximately fifteen years later than (2).

Kalighat, *c.* 1860.

6. I.S. 462–1950 to I.S. 468–1950. A series of seven pictures illustrating the following religious subjects—*Krishna and Balarama* (I.S. 462–1950, Fig. 19), *Siva and Parvati*, *Rama*, *Sita*, *Lakshman and Hanuman*, *Saraswati*.

From the John Irwin collection, given 1950.

A series not unlike (5) but with the following distinctive features—wash backgrounds in pale lemon yellow, hard black borders, a lavish use of tiny dots and lines, the whole as if besprinkled with silver pigment.

Kalighat, *c.* 1865.

PERIOD III: 1870–1885

7. I.S. 634–1950 to I.S.694–1950. A series of sixty-one pictures illustrating:

(a) Sixty religious or mythological subjects including *Radha and Krishna*, *Siva and Parvati*, *Ram*, *Sita*, *Lakshman and Hanuman*, *Durga*, *Nala and Damayanti* (I.S. 668–1950, Fig. 27), *Brahma enthroned*, *Kali standing on Siva*, *Yama claiming Satyavan from Savitri* (I.S. 688–1950, Fig. 26).

(b) Historical subject—*Lakshmi Bai*, *Rani of Jhansi* (I.S. 655–1950).

Bought from Miss M. Steele, 1950—the set being part of a collection inherited from her mother, a scholar in Sanskrit at Cambridge in 1894. When delivering the pictures, Miss Steele reported that her grandmother had also lived in India for some time and that it was possible that the pictures were originally collected by her.

In style, considerably more summary than earlier examples.

Kalighat, *c.* 1880.

8. I.M. 2–1917 Sub-numbers 73, 185, 187–90, 197. A series of seven pictures illustrating the following religious subjects—*Kali*, *Siva and Parvati*, *Hanuman*, *Lakshmi*, *Siva on the Bull Nandi* (I.M. 2/190–1917, Fig. 29), *Saraswati*.

From the J. Lockwood Kipling collection, given by Rudyard Kipling, 1917.

A series notable for bold brush-strokes in black and for its lavish use of flat red areas.

Kalighat, *c.* 1880.

9. I.S. 3–1949, I.S. 75–1949, I.S. 77–1949. Three paintings on religious subjects including *Siva holding a Sitar* (I.S. 3–1949, Fig. 28).

Acquired from the Church Missionary Society, through Mrs E. M. Milford, 1949.

Style similar to (8).

Kalighat, *c.* 1880.

10. I.M. 106–1914 to I.M. 141–1914, I.M. 146–1914. A series of thirty-seven pictures illustrating:

(a) Thirty-two religious subjects including *Saraswati*, *Vishnu as Narasimha*, *Devi as Kali*, *Durga on the Tiger*, *Siva and Parvati*, *Siva as a Musician* (I.M. 118–1914, Fig. 32), *Krishna and Balarama*, *Krishna at Jasoda's Breast* (I.M. 119–1914, Fig. 31), *Radha and Krishna*, *Hanuman* (I.M. 133–1914, Fig. 33), *Jasoda, with a pitcher, holding Krishna's Hand* (I.M. 120–1914, Fig. 30).

(b) A 'documentary' of Bengali life—a *Bisti or Water-carrier* (I.M. 139–1914).

(c) Four scenes satirical of modern society—*Indolence* (a man seated holding a hookah, his wife handing him betel-nut, I.M. 137–1914), *Religious Decay* (a convict priest, guarded by an armed warder, working at an oil-mill, I.M. 138–1914), *Domestic Strife promoted by Western Morals* (a foppish husband slaying his Westernized wife, I.M. 140, 141–1914, Fig. 34).

Given by Ernest H. Hindley, 1914.

A set characterized by a markedly bolder treatment of the human form and by sumptuously rounded contours. Silver pigment present but used more sparingly. A significant feature is the presence, for the first time, of satirical motifs.

For a series, closely similar in style and scope,

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compare the pictures on loose sheets in the Monier Williams collection (Indian Institute, Oxford). These include several satirical studies of Westernized couples as well as such secular scenes as *A Mouse Peep-show* (Fig. 20), and a *Cat biting a Prawn* (Fig. 21). In addition there are the following survivals from the Anglo-Indian tradition of Natural History drawing—*A Prawn and Rui Fish* (Fig. 22), *A Hand holding Prawns* (Fig. 25), and *A Fishing Eagle bearing its prey* (Fig. 23).

Kalighat, *c.* 1880.

11. Four line drawings satirical of modern Calcutta life—*A Youth carousing with his Mistress* (I.S. 23–1952), *Lovers embracing* (I.S. 24–1952, Fig. 36, I.S. 26–1952), *A Husband slaying his Westernized Wife* (I.S. 25–1952, Fig. 35, line version of Fig. 34).

From the W. G. Archer collection, given 1952.

The drawings were obtained in 1932 from Mukul Dey of Calcutta, who had purchased them in about 1920 from the artist, Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh (*c.* 1835–1930).

The recourse to black line drawing is paralleled by the increasing use of black brush-strokes as in (8).

Kalighat, *c.* 1880.

12. Two line drawings illustrating Hindu themes—*Siva* (I.S. 27–1952), *Saraswati* (I.S. 28–1952).

From the W. G. Archer collection, given 1952.

Obtained in 1932 from Mukul Dey of Calcutta, who had purchased them in about 1920 from the artist Kali Charan Ghosh (1844–1930), brother of Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh.

Kalighat, *c.* 1880.

13. I.S. 534–1950 to I.S. 608–1952. A series of seventy-five pictures illustrating religious subjects—*Ram and Sita, Radha and Krishna, Siva and Parvati, Durga, Yama, Saraswati.*

Purchased from Miss M. Steele, 1950—the set being a further part of the collection inherited from her mother (*vide* (7) above).

Characterized by black borders, heavy wash backgrounds and garish metallic colouring. In place of silver, dead white. Comparable in other idioms to (10).

Kalighat, *c.* 1885.

PERIOD IV: 1885–1930

14. I.M. 2–1917 Sub-numbers 170, 186, 191, 193–95. Six pictures illustrating the following religious subjects—*Jagannath, Durga, Ganesh, Kali, Brahma and Rama.*

From the J. Lockwood Kipling collection, given by Rudyard Kipling, 1917.

Shading almost completely abandoned, colouring red, violet and yellow, tones harsh and strident.

Kalighat, *c.* 1890.

15. I.S. 2–1949, I.S. 4–1949, I.S. 76–1949. Three pictures illustrating religious themes.

Acquired from the Church Missionary Society, through Mrs E. M. Milford, 1949.

Similar in style to (14).

Kalighat, *c.* 1890.

16. I.S. 225–1950. *The Goddess Kali.*

From a Roman Catholic Missionary College, acquired 1950.

Similar in style to (14) and (15).

Kalighat, *c.* 1890.

17. Eight pictures comprising:

(a) Three feminine studies—*Woman with Mirror* (I.S. 29–1952, Fig. 39), *Woman with Sitar* (I.S. 30–1952, Fig. 38), *Woman with Roses* (I.S. 31–1952, *cover*).

(b) Five unfinished studies in water-colour and pencil, satirical of modern Calcutta life—*The Suppliant Lover* (I.S. 32 to 34–1952, Fig. 37), *A Husband slaying his Westernized Wife* (I.S. 35–1952), *A Husband punishing his unfaithful Spouse* (I.S. 36–1952).

From the W. G. Archer collection, given 1952.

Originally purchased at Kalighat in 1932 from the family of Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh (*c.* 1835–1930).

The finished pictures are on a large and florid scale employing broad washes of colour, sweeping black curves and little shading.

Kalighat, *c.* 1900.

18. Five pictures comprising:

(a) Two feminine studies—*A Woman dressing her Hair* (I.S. 37–1952, Fig. 40), *A Woman smoking a Hookah* (I.S. 38–1952).

(b) A scene satirical of modern Calcutta life—*A Woman trampling on her Lover* (I.S. 39–1952, Fig. 42).

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(c) Two religious subjects—*Krishna at Jasoda's Breast* (I.S. 40–1952, Fig. 41), *Kartikeya astride the Peacock* (I.S. 41–1952).

From the W. G. Archer collection, given 1952.

Purchased at Kalighat in 1932 from the family of the artist, Kali Charan Ghosh (1844–1930).

All five pictures are in a large and sumptuous style, red and black predominating.

Kalighat, *c.* 1900.

19. I.S. 187–1949, *Krishna milking a Cow.*

Acquired from A. B. Bartlett, Esq., 1949.

Similar in style to (17).

Kalighat, *c.* 1900.

20. Five pictures comprising:

(a) Two line drawings of current Bengali life —*A Woman at her Toilet* (I.S. 42–1952), *A Gentleman with Lap-dogs* (I.S. 43–1952).

(b) Two line drawings in the Natural History tradition—*A Crow on a Branch* (I.S. 44–1852), *A Cat with a Fish* (I.S. 45–1952)—the latter, perhaps an illustration to a Bengali folk-tale.

(c) A water-colour study—*The pet Parrot* (I.S. 46–1952).

From the W. G. Archer collection, given 1952.

Purchased at Kalighat in 1932 from the artist, Kanhai Lal Ghosh (*b.* 1907). When the pictures were acquired, this artist was no longer painting—the school having ended in about 1925. The present pictures are remarkable only for the weakness of their line.

Kalighat, *c.* 1920.

21. I.S. 47–1952 and I.S. 48–1952. Two lithographs, based on Kalighat models, depicting a woman with a rose and a woman with a hookah.

From the W. G. Archer collection, given 1952. Purchased in Calcutta in 1932.

The lithographs follow the originals closely, adding however, a trashy ornate flooring and infusing the subjects with 'sheeny' naturalism.

Printed at the Kansaripara Art Studio, 26, Kristo Das Pal's Lane, Calcutta.

Calcutta, *c.* 1930.

22. Two tinted wood-cuts, based on Kalighat models, depicting:

(a) *A Hand with Prawns* (I.S. 469–1950).

(b) *Krishna stealing the milkmaids' clothes* (I.S. 470–1950).

From the John Irwin collection, given 1950. Acquired in Calcutta in 1943, from Jamini Roy who had purchased them in about the year 1930.

Kalighat, *c.* 1900.

AVERAGE SIZES
in inches

(1) 17×11, (2) 17½×10½, (3) 17×11, (4) 18×11, (5) 17×11, (6) 20×13, (7) 18×11, (8) 17×11, (9) 17½×11½, (10) 17¾×11, (11) 18×11, (12) 19×12, (13) 20×13, (14) 17×11, (15) 18×11, (16) 18×10¾, (17) 20×13, (18) 18×11, (19) 18×11, (20) 18×11, (21) 16×12, (22) 17×10½.

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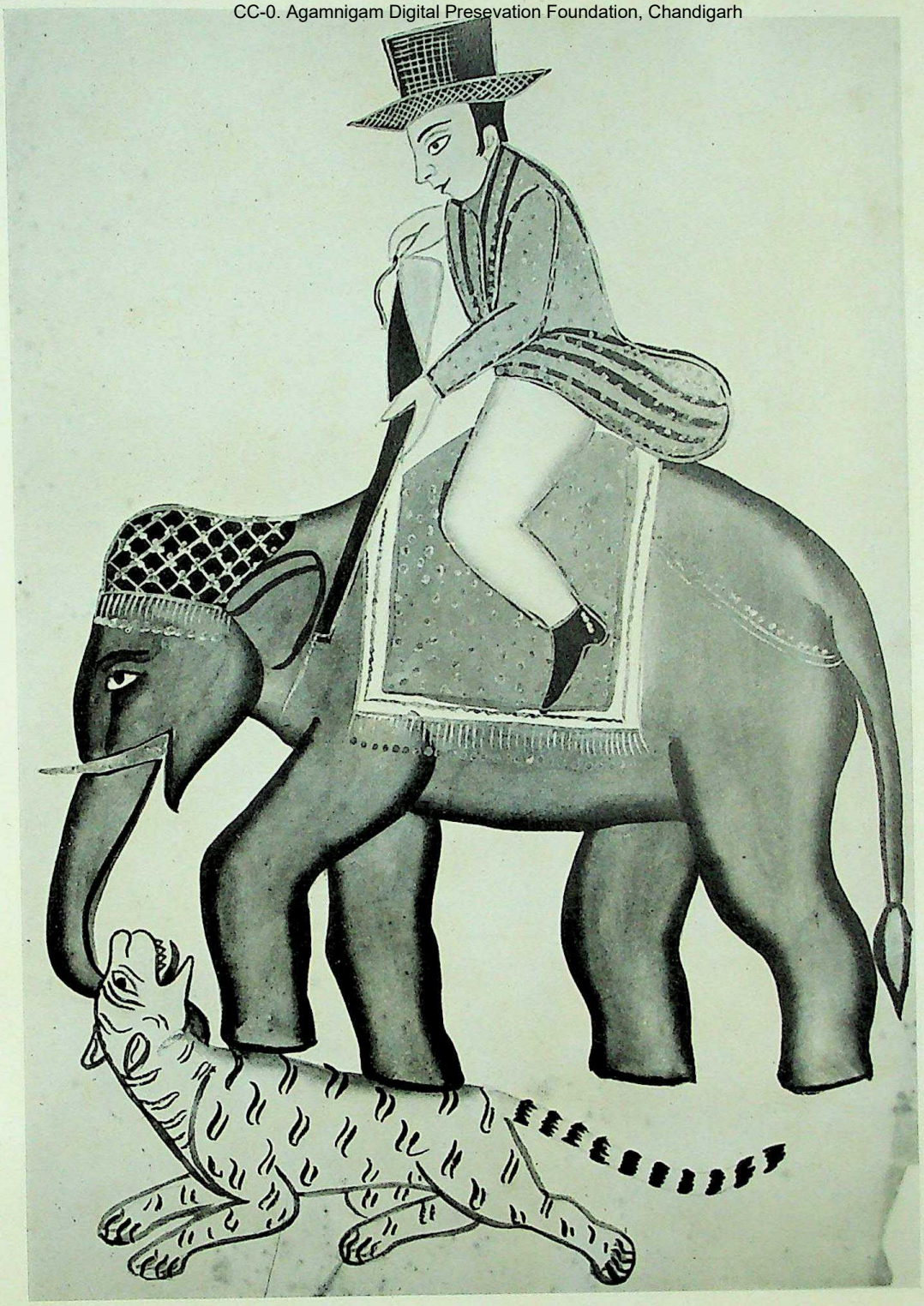

1. Englishman on an Elephant shooting at a Tiger. *Kalighat, c.* 1830.

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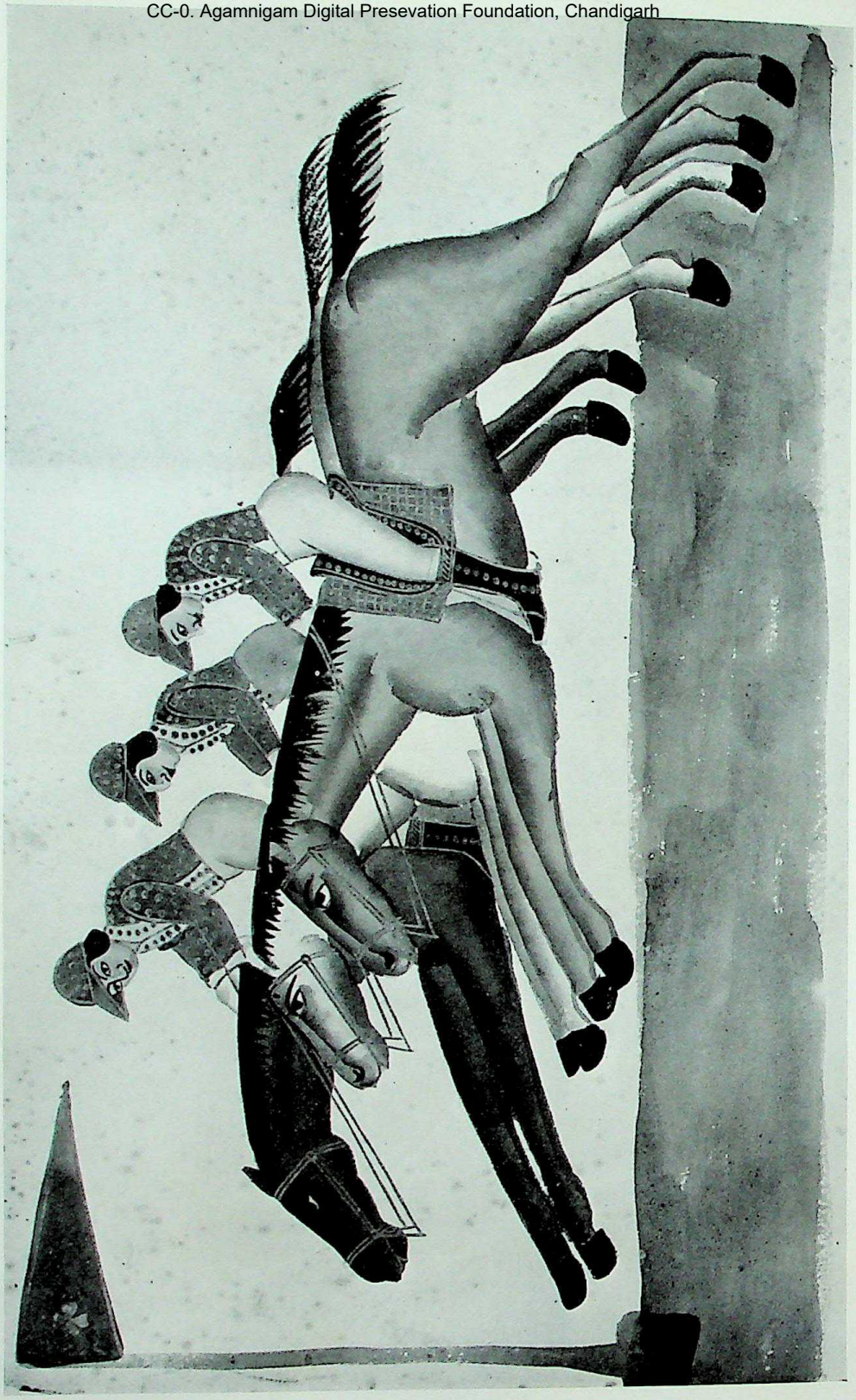

2. Jockeys horse-racing. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1830.

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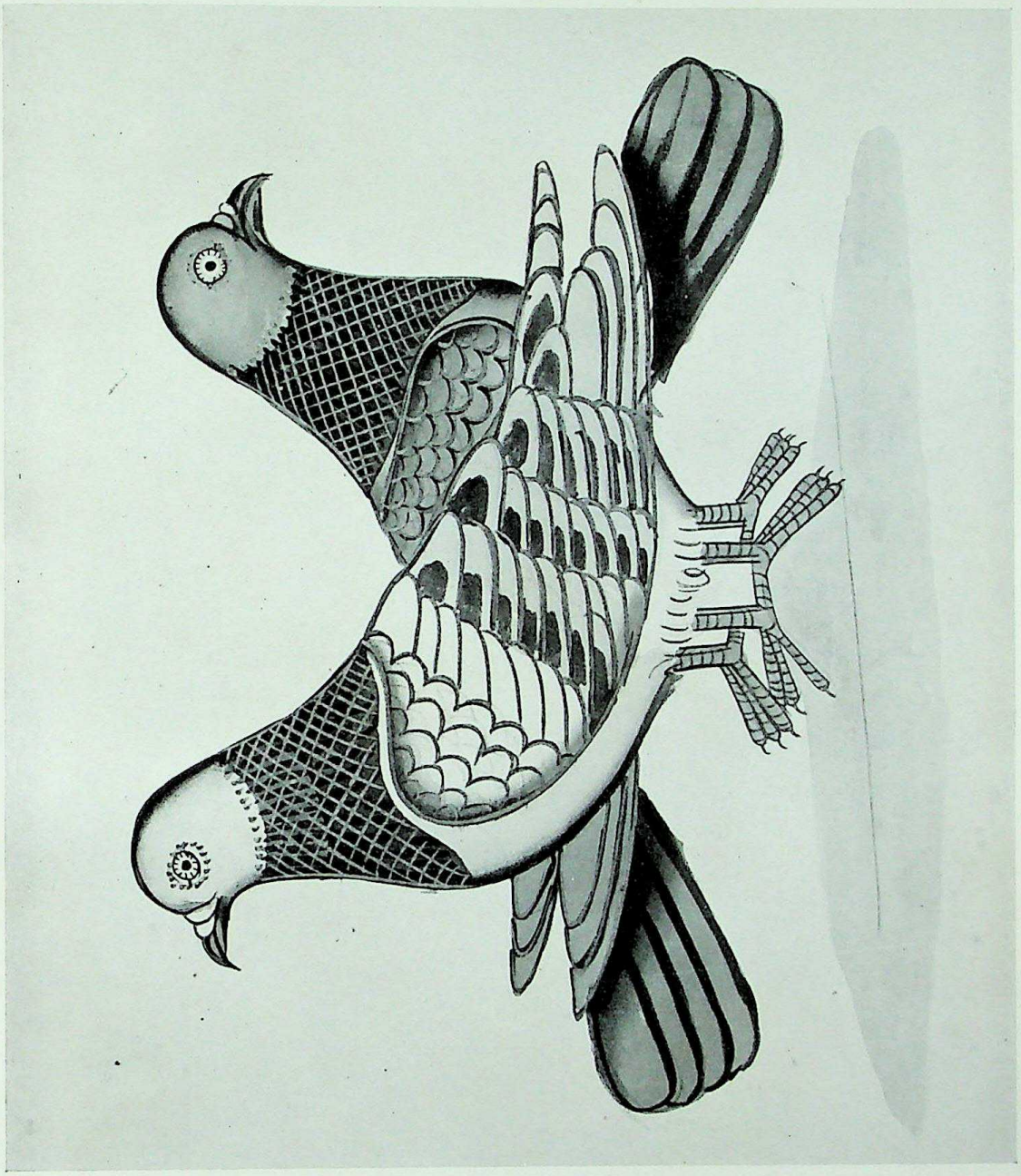

3. Two Pigeons. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1830.

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4. Syamakantha fighting with the Tiger. *Kalighat, c.* 1830.

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5. Hanuman with Rama and Sita in his Heart. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1830.

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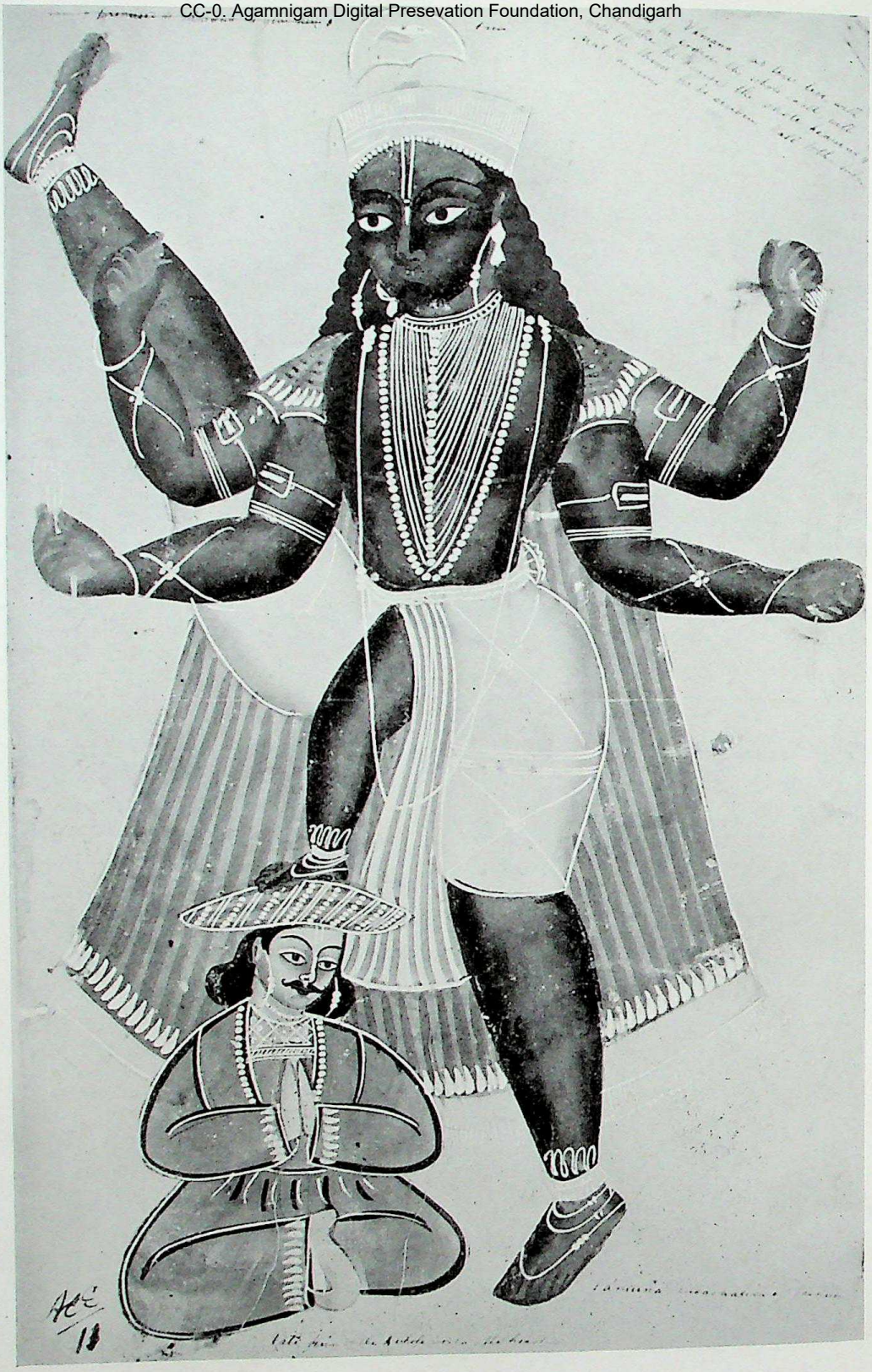

6. Vamana quelling Bali. *Kalighat, c.* 1845.

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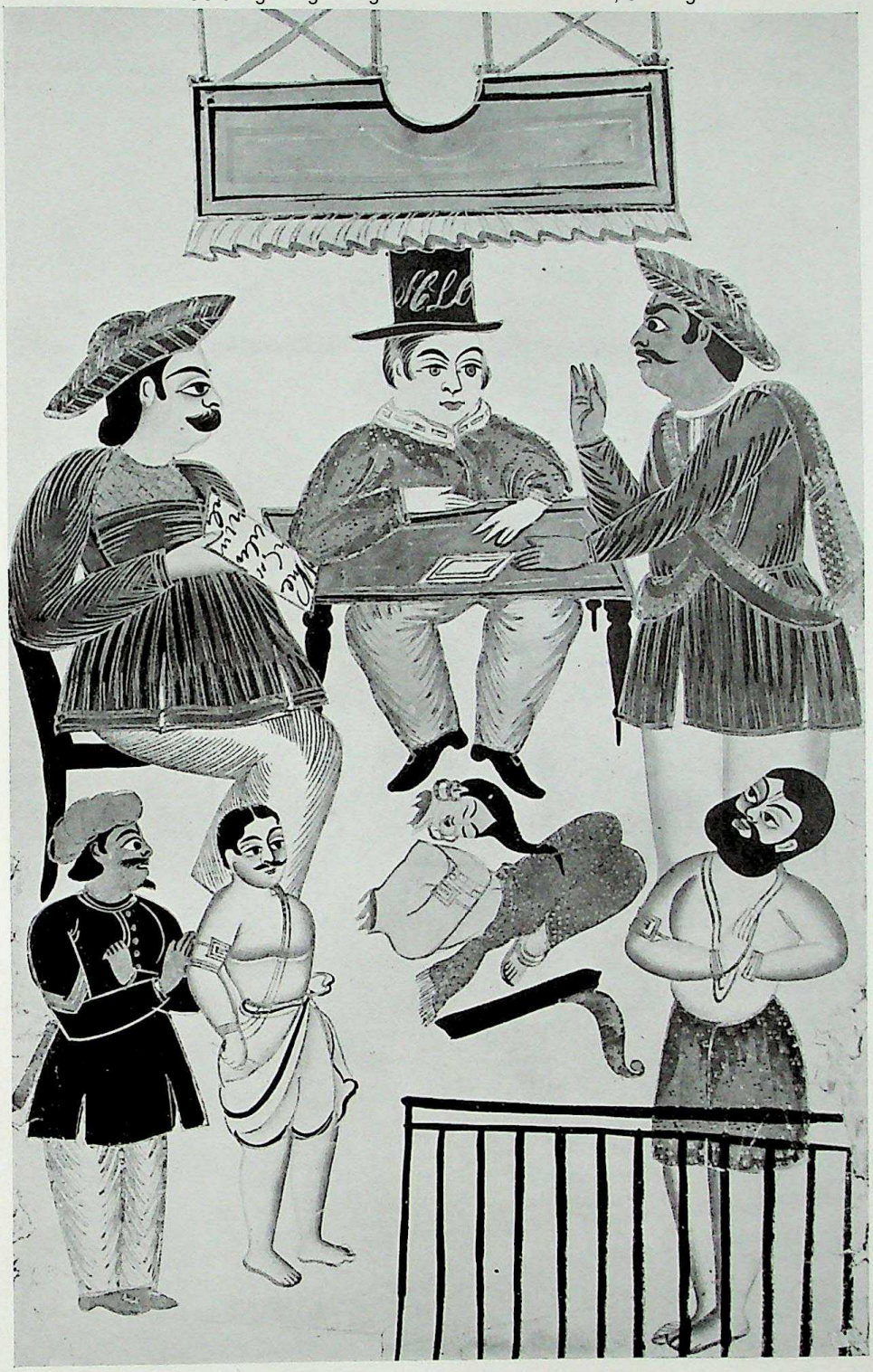

7. The Murder Trial; an Englishman dispensing justice. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1845.

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8. Krishna killing Bakasura, the Heron Demon. *Kalighat, c.* 1845.

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9. Radha at Krishna's feet. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1830.

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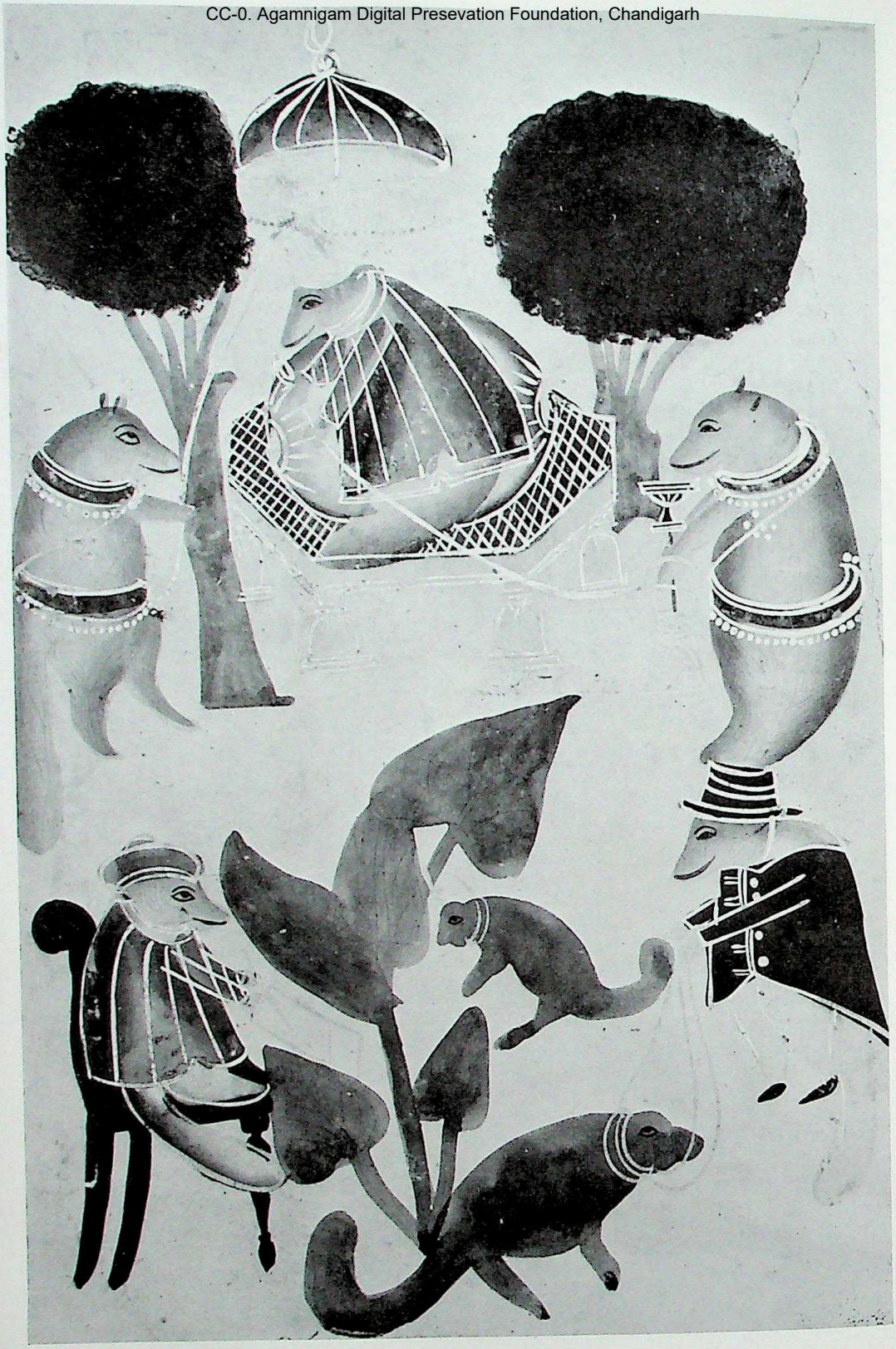

10. The Jackal Raja's Court. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1845.

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11. The Seated Musician. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1845.

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12. Celestial with a Stag. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1860.

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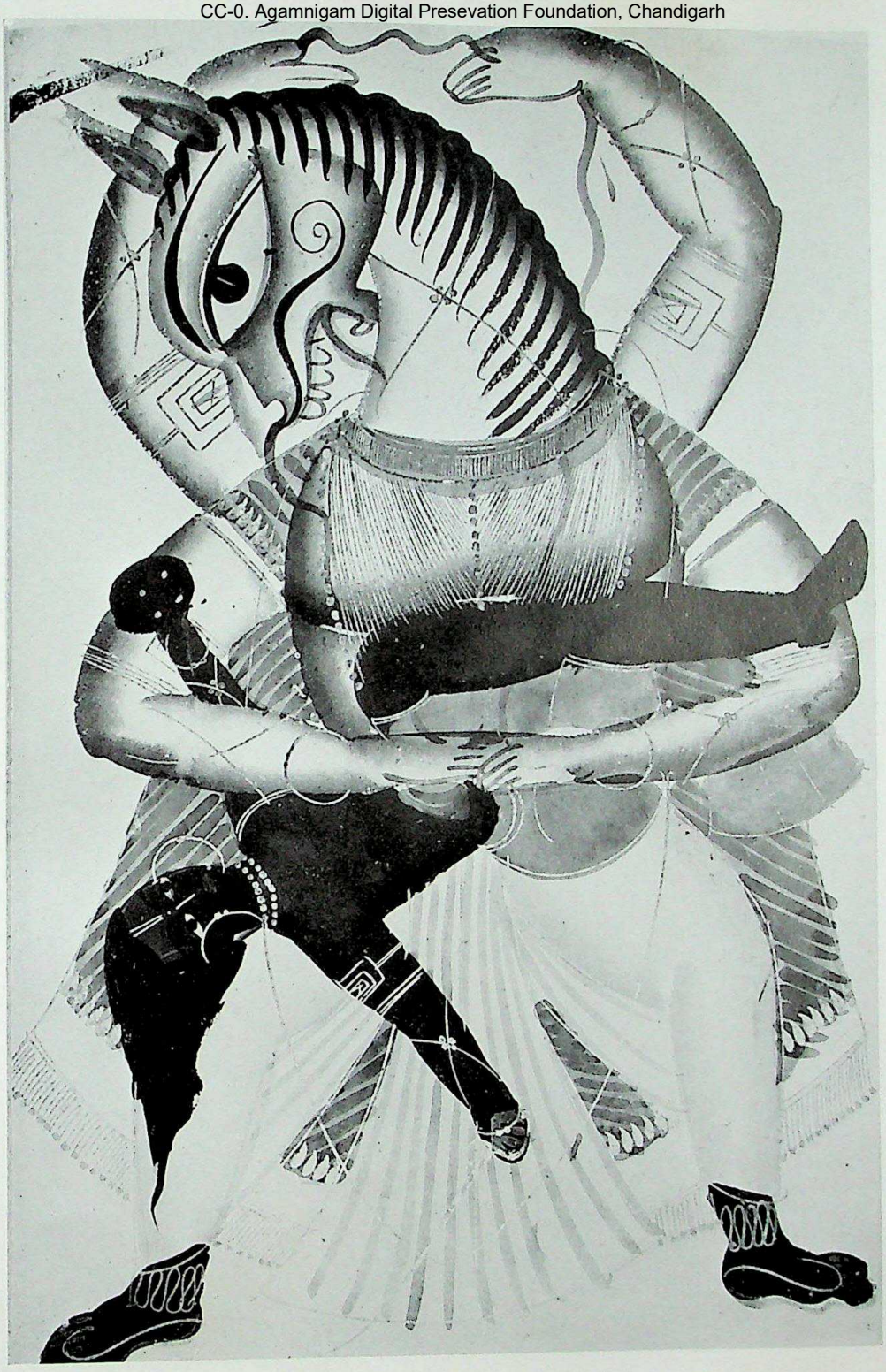

13. Narasimha rending the Demon King. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1860.

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14. Krishna and Balarama. *Kalighat, c.* 1860.

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15. The Goddess Ganga. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1860.

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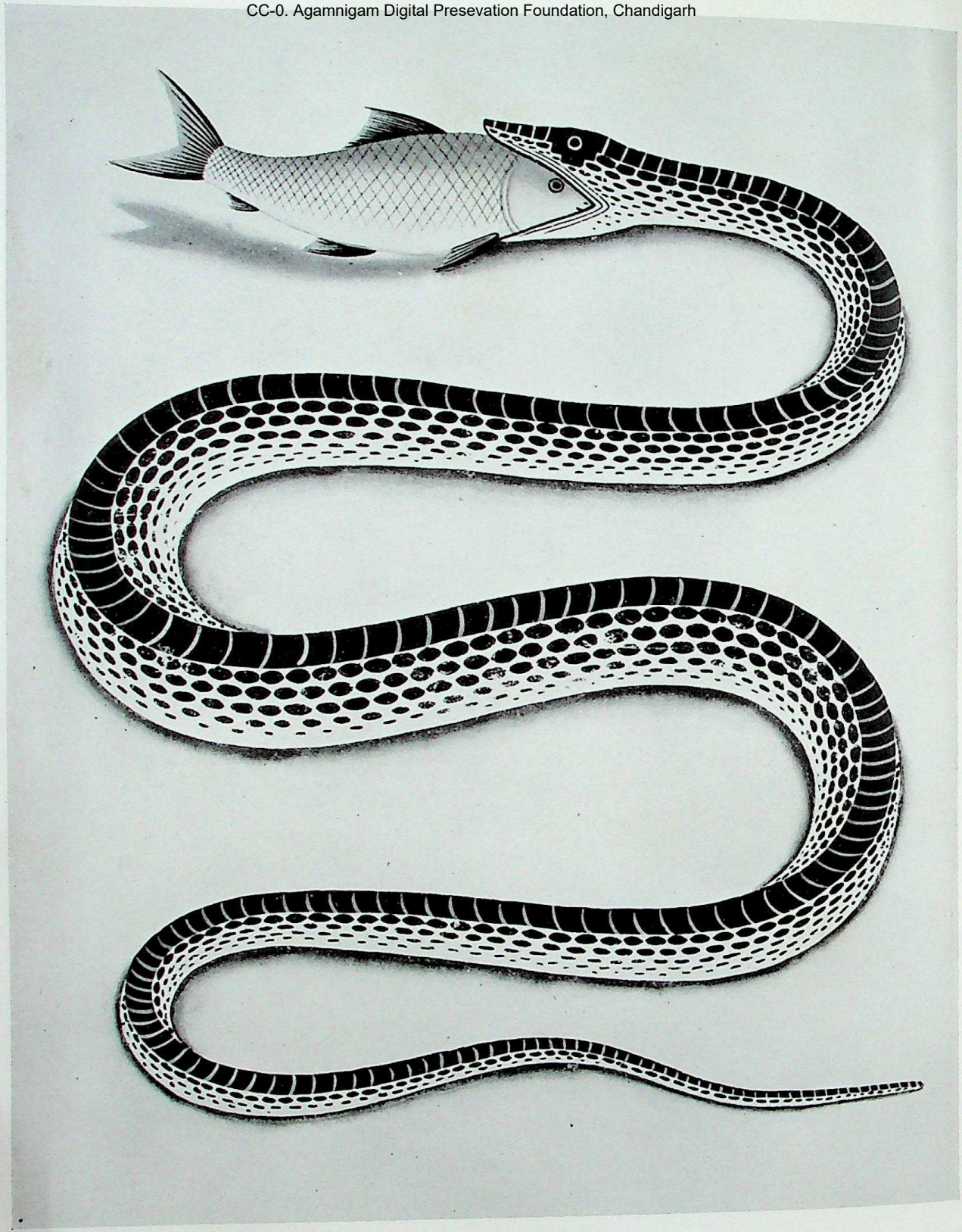

16. Snake eating a Fish. *Kalighat, c.* 1860.

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17. Siva as Mahayogi. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1860.

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18. Women at a Shrine. *Kalighat, c.* 1860.

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19. Krishna and Balarama. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1865.

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20. The Mouse Peep-show. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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21. Cat with Prawn. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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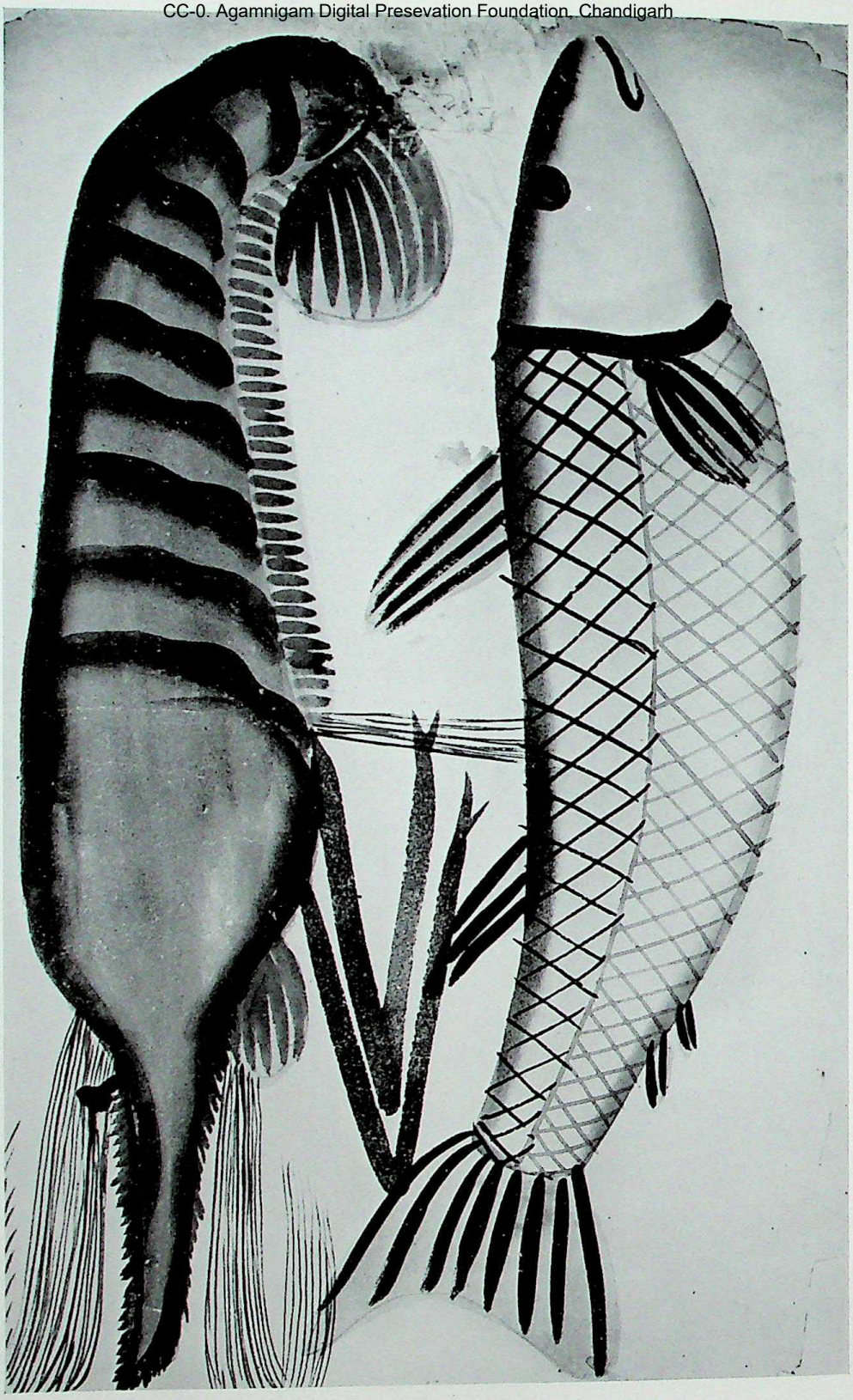

22. Prawn and Rui Fish. *Kalighat, c.* 1880.

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23. Fishing Eagle. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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24. Syamakantha fighting with the Tiger. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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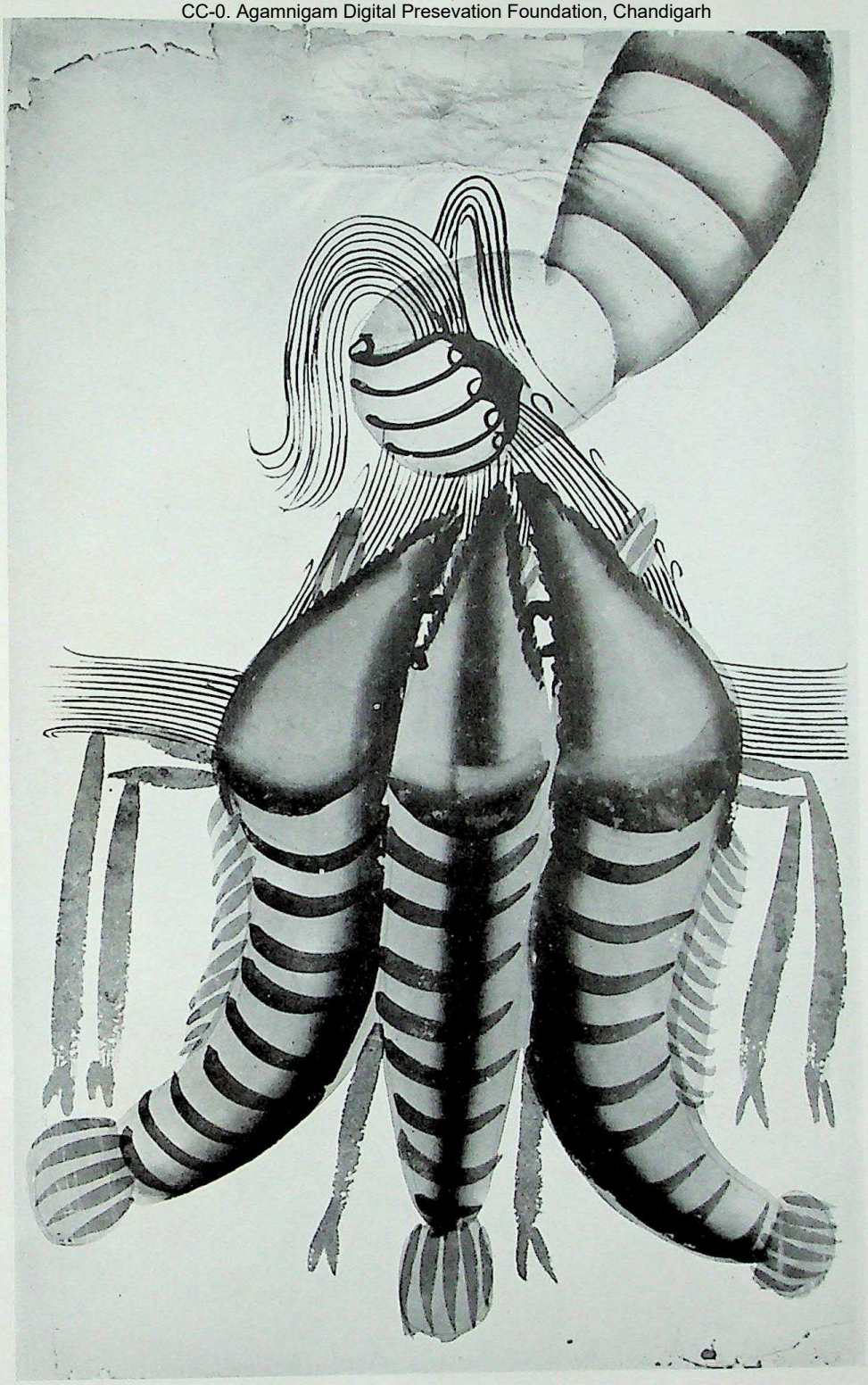

25. Hand with a Bunch of Prawns. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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26. Savitri begging the God of Death to restore her Husband. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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27. Nala and Damayanti. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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28. Siva as Ascetic and Musician. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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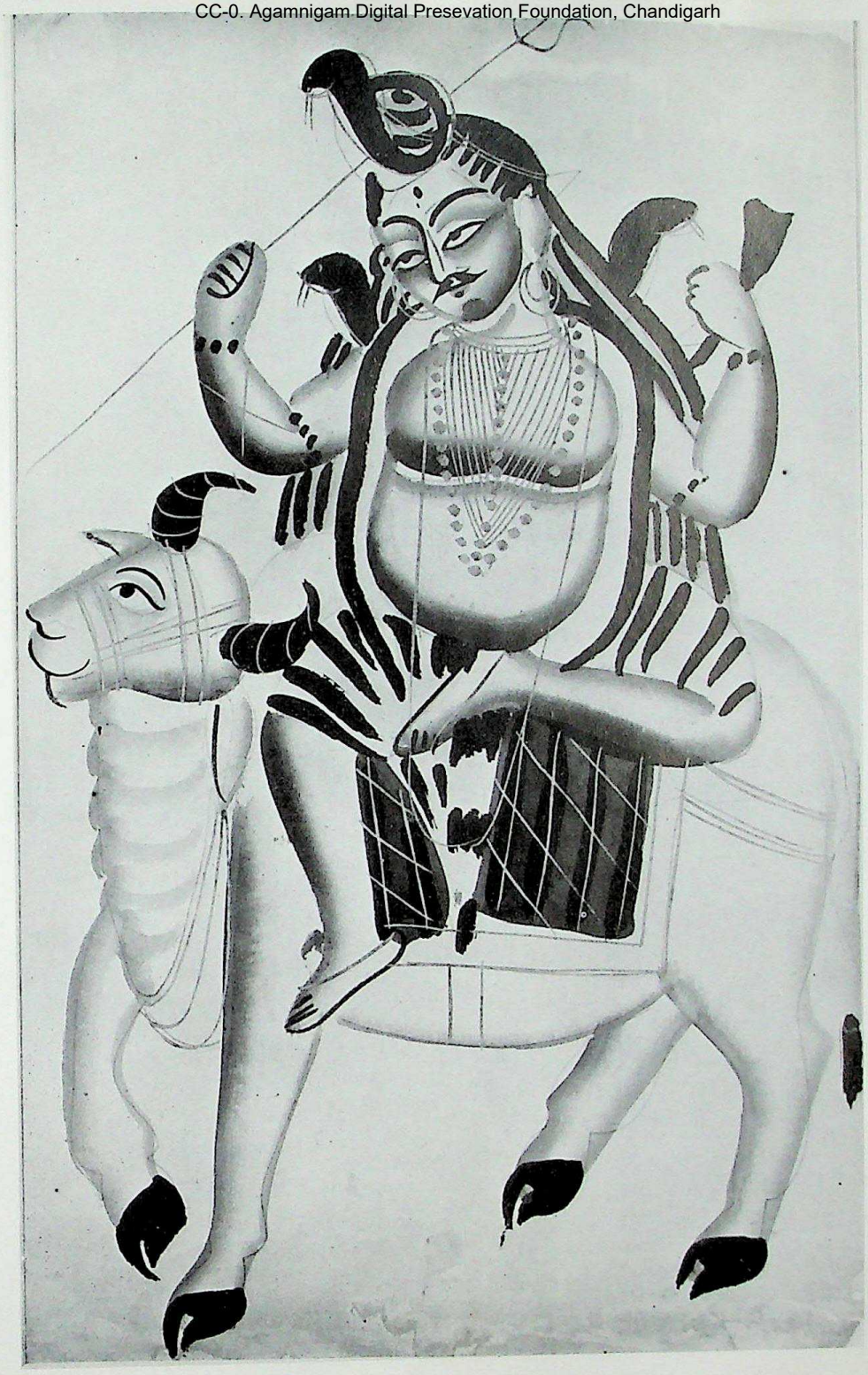

29. Siva on the Bull, Nandi. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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30. Jasoda with the infant Krishna. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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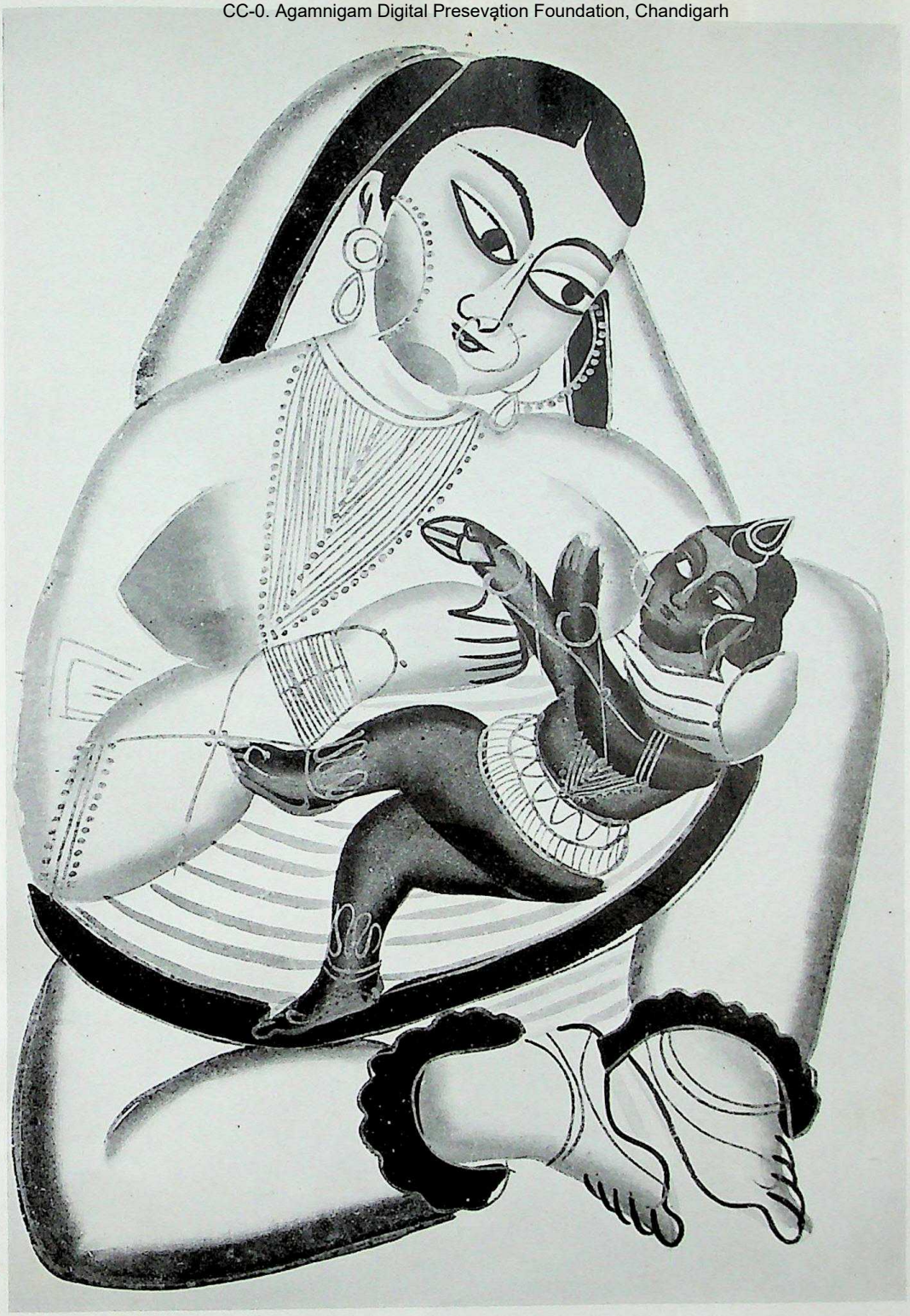

31. Krishna at Jasoda's Breast. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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32. Siva as Ascetic and Musician. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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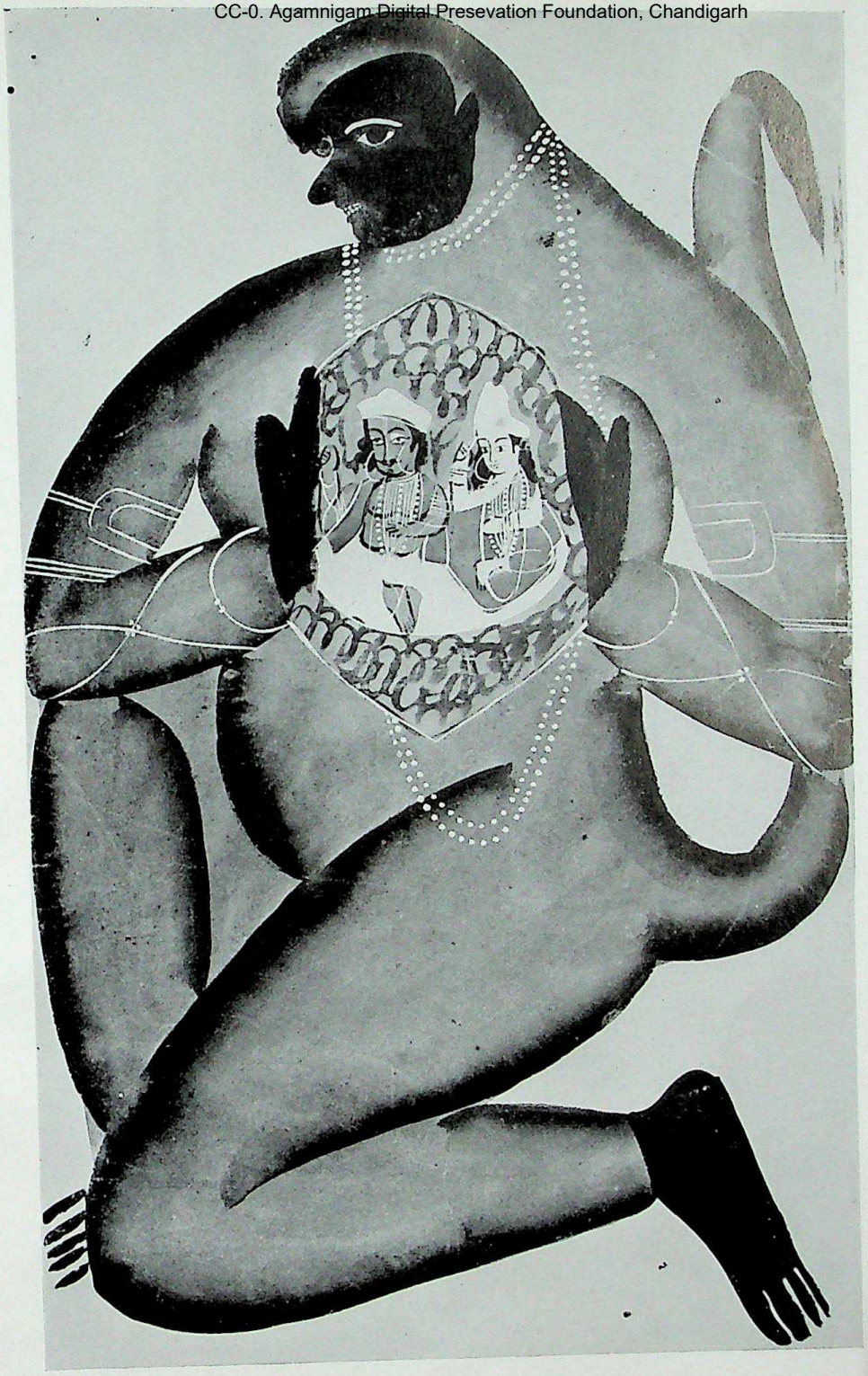

33. Hanuman with Rama and Sita in his Heart. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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34. A Husband slaying his Westernized Wife. *Kalighat, c.* 1880.

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35. A Husband slaying his Westernized Wife. By Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh. *Kalighat, c.* 1880.

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36. Lovers embracing. By Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1880.

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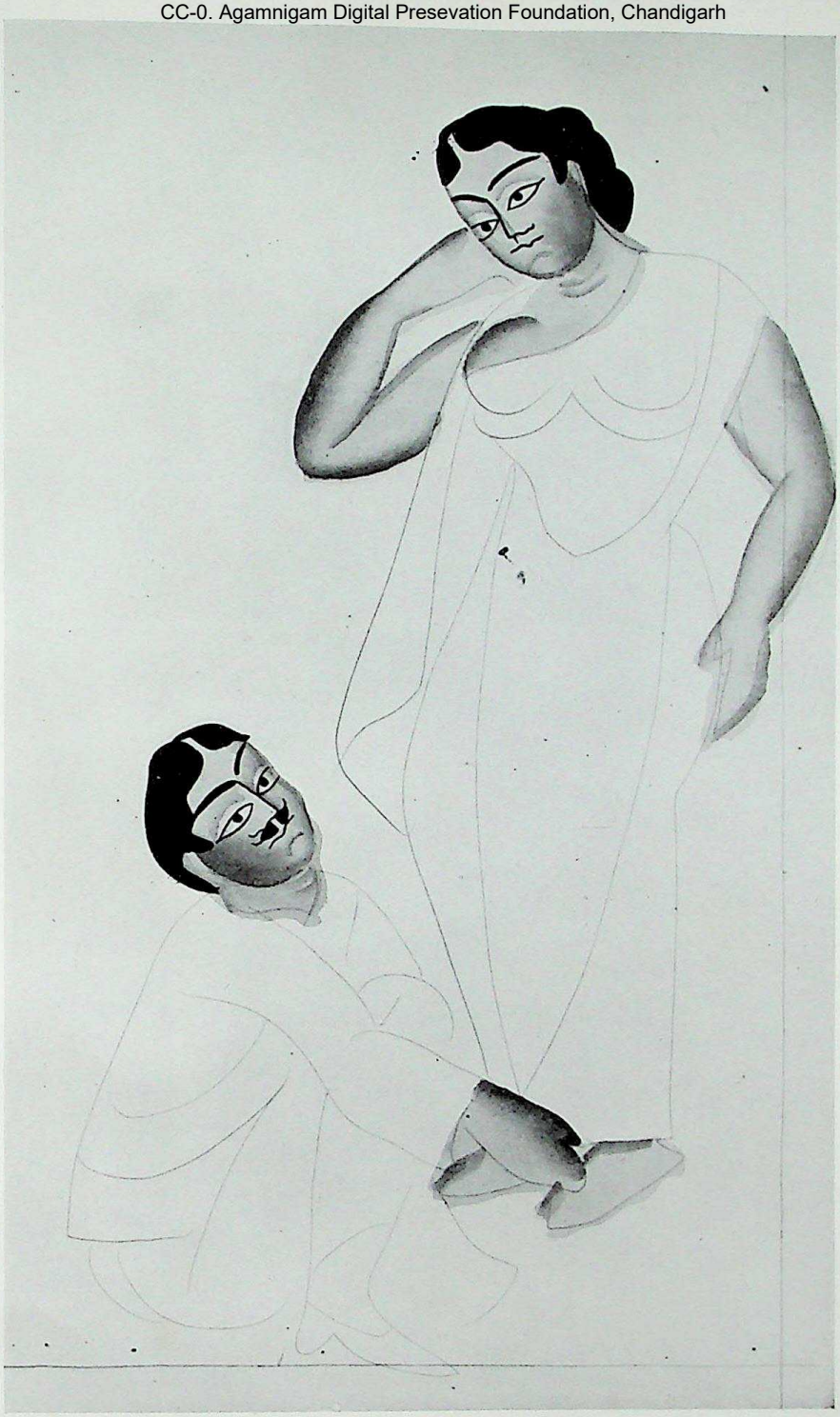

37. The Suppliant Lover. By Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1900.

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38. Woman with Sitar. By Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1900.

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39. Woman with Mirror. By Nirbaran Chandra Ghosh. *Kalighat, c.* 1900.

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40. Woman dressing her Hair. By Kali Charan Ghosh. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1900.

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41. Krishna at Jasoda's Breast. By Kali Charan Ghosh. *Kalighat, c.* 1900.

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42. A Woman trampling on her Lover. By Kali Charan Ghosh. *Kalighat*, *c.* 1900.

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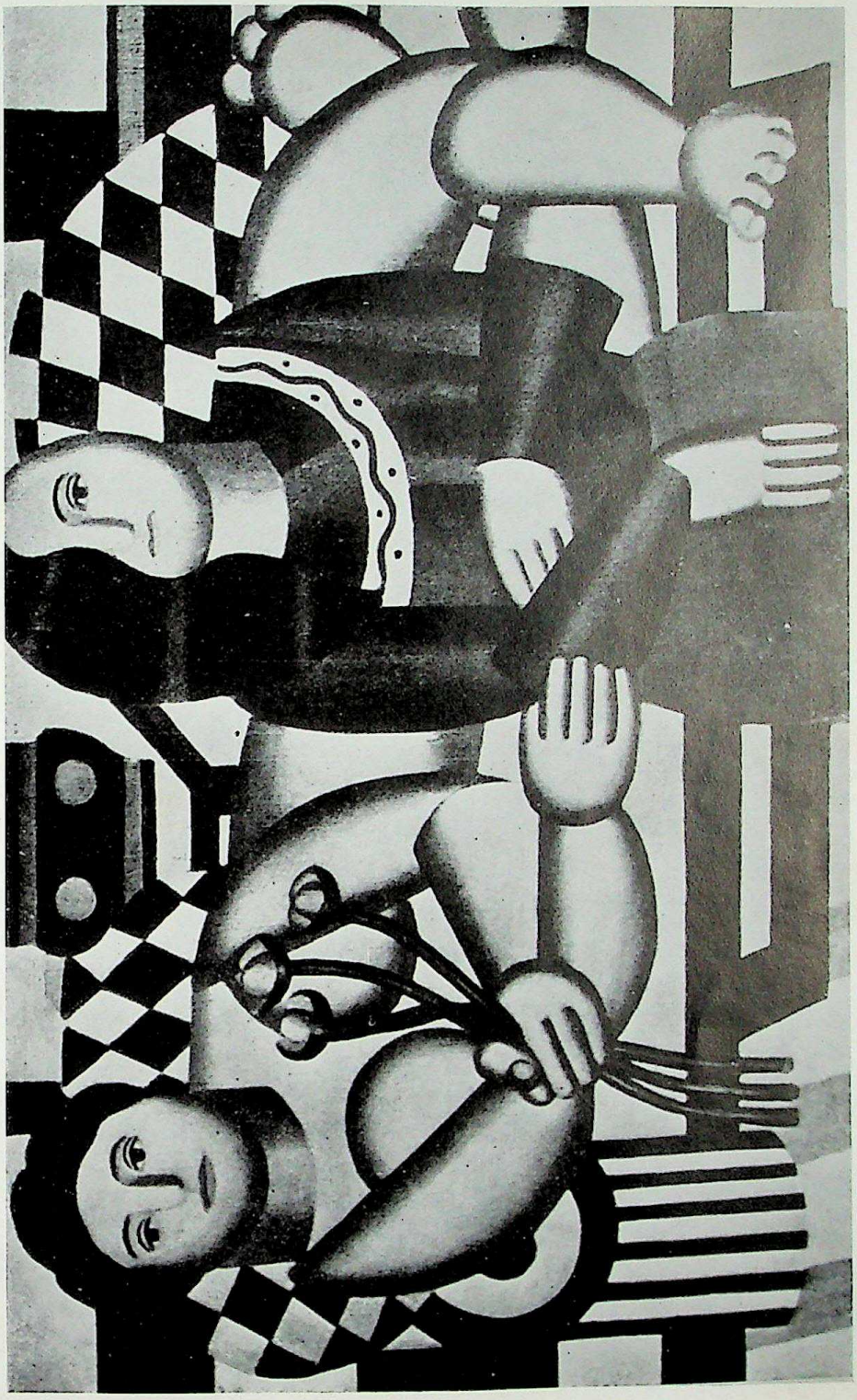

43. Fernand Léger. Two Figures, 1923.

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44. Jamini Roy. Santal Girl, *c.* 1924.

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45. The Combat of Hanuman. Scroll-painting, illustrating the Ramayana, by a rural *patua* artist. Murshidabad District, West Bengal, *c.* 1820.

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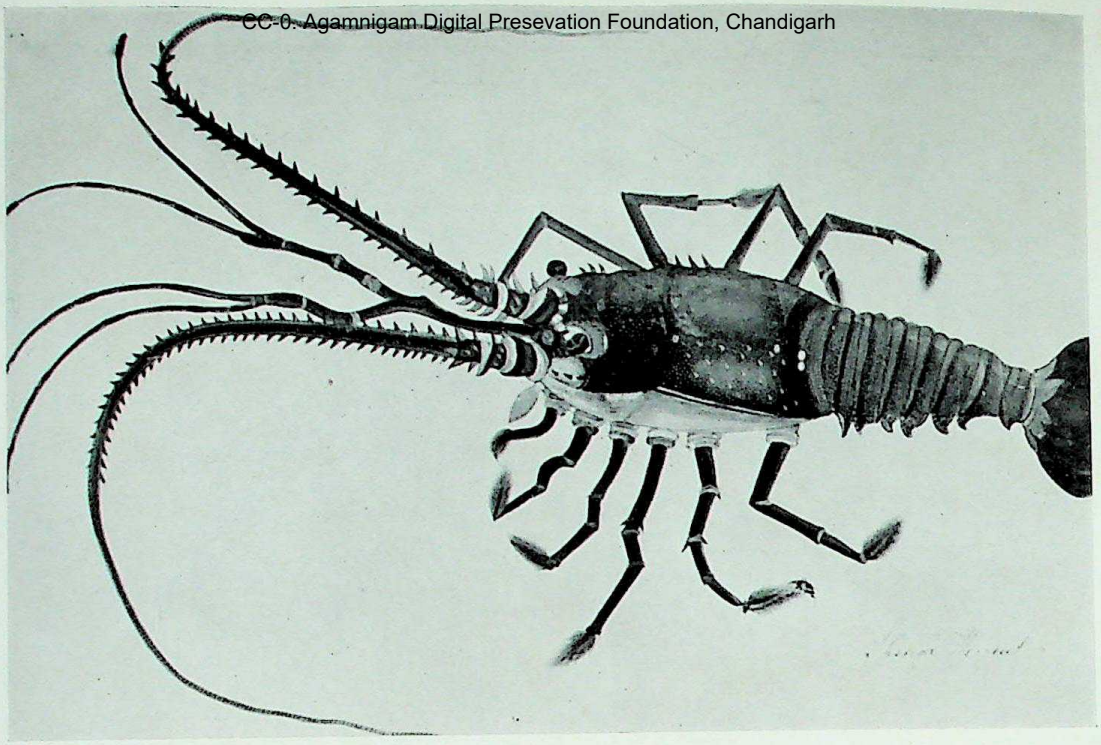

46. Crawfish. From a volume of Natural History drawings by an Indian artist working for the British, *c.* 1800.

47. Hoopoe. From a volume of Bird studies prepared for the Marquess Wellesley by Indian artists in Calcutta, *c.* 1802.

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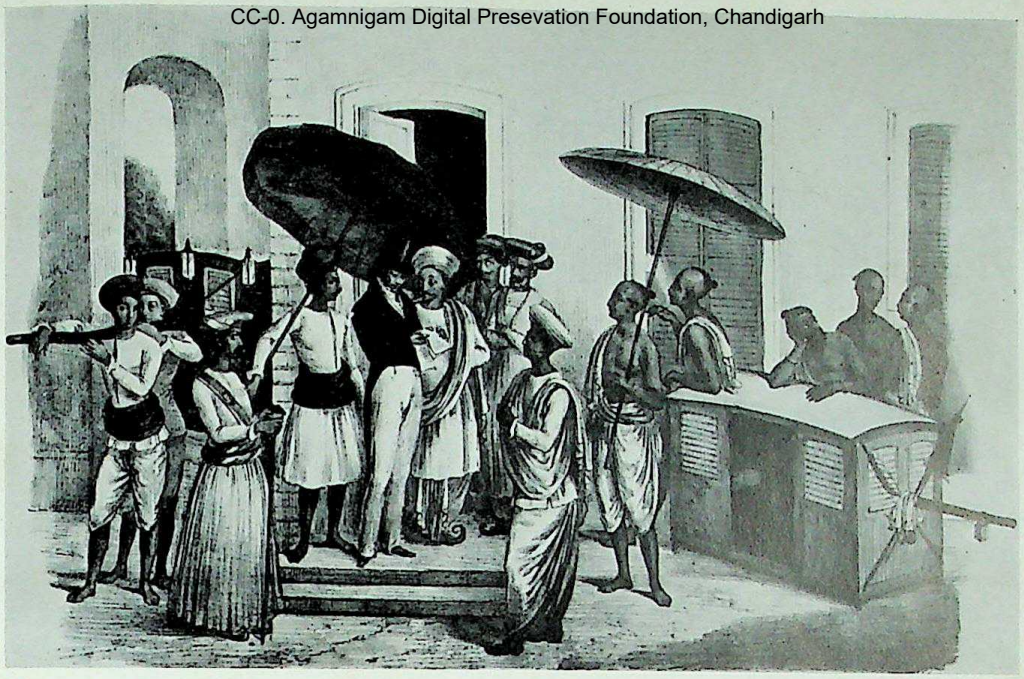

48. A Civilian going out. Plate 23 from Mrs S. C. Belnos, *Manners in Bengal* (London, 1832).

49. A Kutcherry or Magistrate's Court. From Sir Charles D'Oyly, *The Bihar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbook*, 1828.

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50. Interior of a Native Hut. Plate 14 from Mrs S. C. Belnos, *Manners in Bengal* (London, 1832).

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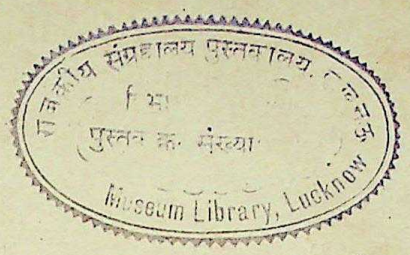

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